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# FIELDIANA

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## **Anthropology**

NEW SERIES, NO. 32

### **Mortuary Ritual of the Badagas of Southern India**

**Paul Hockings**

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### Mortuary Ritual of the Badagas of Southern India

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*For Murray B. Emeneau*

*Centenarian Nilgiriologist*



# Introduction

## The Badagas

The Badagas form the largest indigenous community among over a dozen tribal groups on the Nilgiri Hills, in the extreme northwest of Tamil Nadu State in southern India. Their name, *baḍaga* (meaning “northerner”), was ascribed to them after they migrated here from the plains just to the north, in the decades following the breakup of the Vijayanagar Empire in 1565. After establishing farms on the hills, the men, using fixed fields and some swidden cultivation, grew millets, barley, and wheat. People rely on the rainfall of two regular monsoons.

Their villages consist of several rows of houses, with work yards in front, that lie along the slope of a hill and are surrounded by fields. A few Hindu temples or shrines are also included, and modern villages have piped water, often some shops, perhaps too a school, post office, and bus service. Other features are a village green and usually a funerary ground.

Traditionally, Badaga society was a chiefdom, and Badagas still have a hereditary paramount chief, below whom are four divisional headmen. Every village also has its own headman, and several neighboring villages together constitute a commune or circle of villages with its own headman. At each of these levels, councils still exist, but their authority has been greatly undermined by modern law courts. The headmen, who could once dictate severe punishments, today are mainly involved with petty disputes or ceremonial duties.

The community is divided into a number of phratries, large social groups made up of two or more exogamous clans; phratries are culturally distinct from or differently ranked from each other. There are two clans each in the case of the Toreyas, Beḍas, and Kumbaras, three in the case of Woḍeyas, and rather more in the other cases. Some might prefer to call the phratries subcastes, because although they have no economic special-

ization, they, like Indian subcastes, do form a social hierarchy, with the conservative Lingayat group, the Woḍeyas, somewhat culturally isolated at the top and the commune headman's erstwhile servants, the Toreyas, at the bottom. Between these two extremes there are a phratry of vegetarians and four phratries of meat-eaters, including the numerically dominant Gauḍa phratry. The Christian Badagas, started as a small minority by the first Protestant conversion in 1858, now form a separate meat-eating phratry that is ranked below the Toreyas but still respected. Kotas, Kurumbas, and Todas are neighboring tribal groups that are unrelated to the Badagas but closely associated with them.

Most villages belong to just one particular clan, and at marriage a bride normally moves from her natal village to her husband's. Polygyny is acceptable, though rare. Divorce and remarriage are easy, and widows can remarry. Although a dowry, a financial settlement on the groom, has become required during the past three decades, it is not a traditional part of Badaga marriage arrangements. Instead, a bridewealth of up to 200 rupees or so was paid by the groom's family. People prefer to marry a cross-cousin, a father's sister's daughter or mother's brother's daughter; but other, more distant relations are acceptable, if they belong to the appropriate clan.

Except for nearly four thousand Christians, all Badagas are Saivite Hindus. A sizable minority, however, are Lingayats, a sect that is almost confined to Karnataka State. They take Siva as their prime deity, and worship him through a phallic emblem, the *linga*. Among the Badaga Lingayats are the Woḍeyas, a culturally distinct phratry of conservative Viraśaivas.

The Hindu Badagas, including even the Lingayat clans, worship quite a number of gods, all of whom can be viewed as “aspects” of Siva. During the year each village has several festivals, and several life-cycle rituals are practiced, including complex funerals and weddings.

Badaga farmers continued some swidden cultivation until the 1870s. By then they grew not only millets, barley, and wheat but also many European crops. They have since continued to adopt certain alien customs and techniques. Thus, crops of foreign origin are grown on machine-made terraces with the help of chemical fertilizers, truck transport, improved seed, and even crop insurance, and their small, newly developed tea plantations must maintain standards necessary for the world markets.

Such progressive attitudes mark the Badagas as unusually successful farmers, and population figures reflect this: they rose from a reported 2,207 people in 1812 to about 200,000 in 2000. By developing cash-crop cultivation, they have managed to accommodate this greatly increased labor force and also to improve their standard of living. There is now a sizable middle class living in the four British-built towns on the Plateau (Ootacamund, Kotagiri, Coonoor, and Wellington), and the community has several thousand college graduates. For nearly a century, fathers have been willing to invest in college education for their sons, so that today Badaga doctors, lawyers, engineers, teachers, and government officials are numerous, and there are also professors, agronomists, bankers, military and judicial personnel, and politicians.

## The Ebb of Life

A truism of modern studies of the funeral anywhere is that the funeral is viewed as “a reassertion of the social order at the time of death” (Bloch and Parry 1982: 6). This South Indian study does not refute that functionalist position; indeed, it accepts it, but it also tries to show—with much ethnographic detail—just how the social order is supported in the arrangement of the complex mortuary ceremonies to which the Badagas are heir.

It is my view that for the Badagas, the funeral is the most complex of all ceremonies because it is the most important, and it is the most important because, being a communal rather than a family ceremony (as a naming or wedding is), it makes clearer than anything else does the key roles, the status differentials, the order of social precedence, and the dominant values in Badaga peasant society. In its premodern incarnation (during previous centuries), that society was also preliterate, which

means that its youth then lacked any means of formally *studying* how their own society was organized. Ceremonies, I will assert, made up for this deficiency in learning by providing visible demonstrations of the most necessary of all lessons, how to behave correctly in society. One of my informants in Ke:ti village hazarded a guess that by the time it was his turn, he might have attended something like three hundred local funerals—perhaps four or five a year. During this time, he will have seen everyone he knows acting out a formal role vis-à-vis his or her fellows, he will have seen such roles changing through the years, and furthermore, this experience will allow him to correlate variations in the performance of the ceremony with the social status of each particular dead person and each live mourner. For children, the lesson is crucial.

Such subcultural variation is itself important, as the very comparison between any one funeral and others that an individual has previously attended is a subtle lesson in social structure. That is the reason why I have chosen to give here a full account of how the funeral is performed, a description that does not stop at a broad description to fit all Badaga Hindu funerals (as do Natesa Sastri 1892 or Noble and Noble 1965). The description could have been expanded considerably by presenting the general features of Badaga Christian burial too, but since I am confident that all readers are broadly familiar with the protocol of Protestant or Catholic funeral ceremonies, I will refrain from lengthening this account.<sup>1</sup>

This is not to imply that the general function of funeral ceremonies is only a pedagogical one. They certainly have a psychological impact on all participants, because they allow for a socially approved release of emotion, and the ritual locates each individual precisely in the social fabric while highlighting the power differences—the sociopolitical structure—that will continue to be fundamental to interpersonal relations in this society. The resultant reaffirmation of status serves to reintegrate each person into the social fabric and to reassert the most general principles of social order.

From the beginning to the end of a funeral, the household is intimately involved with the proceedings. On the first day after the death, the corpse lies on a much-decorated cot, which is first

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<sup>1</sup> See Nanjundayya and Ananthakrishna Iyer (1930: 1–76) for a basic account of South Indian practice, both Catholic and Protestant, by a Hindu anthropologist.

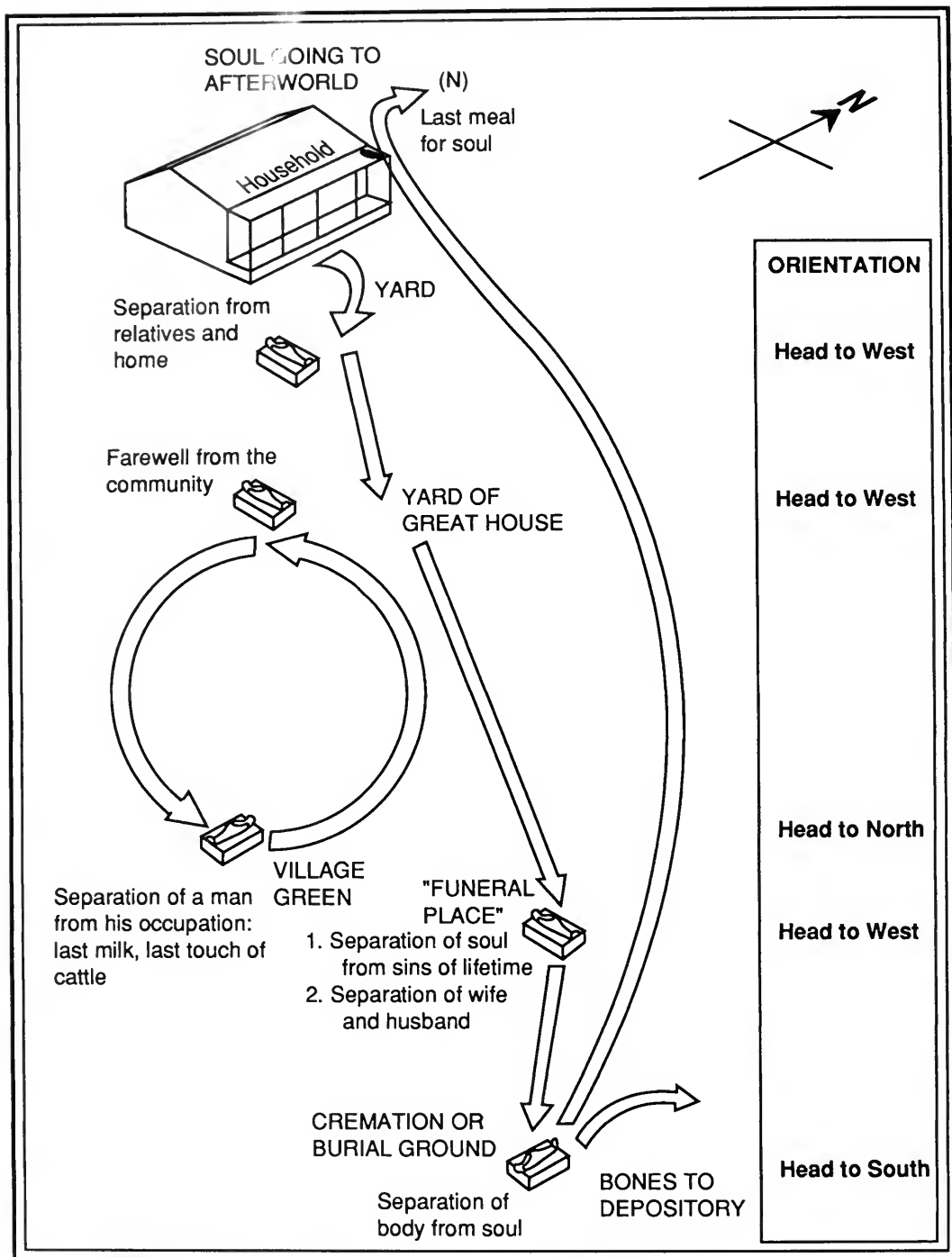


placed in front of the bereaved house and then in the “funeral yard” (*sa:vu ke:ri*), while friends and relatives come to pay their respects and comfort the grieving family. Later, the corpse moves on by stages to its cremation or burial, but since the soul may still be lurking around the house, the final act of the funeral a few days after death involves putting a parting gift of food on the roof of the Great House to help provision the soul on its journey. The rites of separation that constitute a funeral are plotted schematically in Drawings 1 and 5. People indicate no expectation that the soul will ever return by means of reincarnation, for in Badaga thinking, this has been the soul’s final worldly sojourn.

For convenience, I will present the Badaga mortuary rites in five stages: preparation, display, procession, disposal, and subsequent rites. From the point of view of understanding social structure, the procession is the most interesting stage. Since there is so much variation in the protocol,

depending on precisely who the deceased was—his or her age, sex, phratry membership, status in terms of wealth or poverty—I present the ethnographic description in a double-column format. In the pages that follow, the left-hand column gives the general description of what happens, while the right-hand one (which can be skipped) presents additional information and established variations on what is described in the left-hand column. Finally, I analyze the structure of the funeral.

Much ritual must occur before the actual disposal of the corpse. Among Hindu Badagas, there are two main forms of disposal: Lingayats, whether Adikari, Kaṇakka, Woḍeya, or Koṅgaru, bury their dead, whereas the other phratries and clans commonly cremate the dead. If a Ha:ruva clanswoman marries a Lingayat, she will be given a Lingayat burial, as she is united with her husband’s family. Christian Badagas, however, only bury their dead, and normally do so in a designated cemetery.



DRAWING 1. Movements of the corpse during a funeral.

## Preparation for a Funeral

### The Moments Before Death

If an old person is very ill and is expected to die, a message<sup>1</sup> will be sent to most of the surrounding villages, even though they may be of different phratries or even of different tribes, telling people that they should come quickly and visit the unfortunate person before he dies, in order to bless him. The hamlet headman selects the men to carry this news—traditionally, in most areas, he will select the Toreya phratry servants—and he generally expects that some 5 to 10 percent of the invitees will respond; however, no specific number of visitors is suggested. In the case of auspicious ceremonies, the headman sends an invitation to each house, but for matters of illness or death, as for general meetings, the messengers will inform only the other headmen, and leave the extent of the response up to them. A headman who receives such an invitation will select a man in his village who is related to the dying person, and that man will organize a group, usually including the headman, that will make the visit together. It is then up to this organizer to estimate how large the party should be, on the basis of his knowledge of the afflicted family. Invited relatives risk dissension if they do not attend. If it is a woman who is dying, more women than men will go, whereas if it is a man, the group<sup>2</sup> might include only men. A husband and wife are not obliged to go together in these visiting groups, but there should be at least one person from each household in the village. The headman does not compel certain people to go, but once the group has been selected, he calls them together to send them off. Men in such a

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> This message is not sent in the case of a sick person under age 40—and people might not come anyway—because there is a good chance of his recovery, and it is feared that the impact of such melancholy visitors could cause heart failure in a weak person. When no messages are sent, only members of the sick person's village are likely to visit him.

The headman's message may invite a party to visit but may perhaps stipulate that they should not bless the invalid, who will perceive the reason and then worry too much. (Not all quarters of the Nilgiri Hills made use of the Toreya men in this way.)

<sup>2</sup> Reciprocity enters into the arrangement of these groups, for if the organizer had at some point in the past refused to join such a group, he might now find that people refuse to join *his* group. Yet they tell the headman why they are refusing, and so he levies a small fine on the organizer, pockets the money, and after that, those holding back agree to go along.

party visiting a sick person should take along some milk,<sup>3</sup> while the women take rice. These contributions are pooled, and each substance is carried in a single container. Apart from this, the visitors bring no gifts.

Whether or not they bring a band of Kota musicians with them, visitors from other villages are not honored to the extent that they would be at a wedding, during which a Kota band is brought some distance to meet *them* and to accompany them back to the village. For a funeral, they arrive in the yard in front of the Great House, where their sticks and umbrellas are taken from them.<sup>4</sup> On reaching this other village, each group should first be greeted by its headman. In earlier times each man would carry an umbrella as a mark of some status, and this would be taken out of his hands by some man as a gesture of respect and placed on one side. At the same time, men take the milk from male visitors and women take the grain from female visitors. Once these marks of respect have been shown, the more junior persons bow down to senior persons, who put their hands on the foreheads of the ones leaning forward and say, "Live long and prosperously!" and then, "Live for a century!" (Rivers 1906: 631, Fig. 69). In this context a senior person is a priest or someone of an older generation, or simply a man or woman of greater age than the other person.

If the visiting men form a large group, they sit on the grass of the *manda*, the village's council-place, but if they are only a few, they will sit on mats or jute sacking on the veranda of the house in which the sick person lies. They are then given drinks of coffee or hot milk. The women in the party do not sit out in the open air<sup>5</sup> but either are invited directly into the outer room of the house or sit on the veranda.

After this drink, the visitors take off their sandals and go inside to see the sick person, who lies usually in the inner, more sacrosanct room (*o:ga mane*) of the house—which is also the warmer one, because it contains a hearth (Hockings 1999: 34–36). If space permits, the men eat some food there later. Women visitors can also enter this room to bless the sick, but they cannot eat or even drink water there, now or at any other time. The milk brought by the visitors, all mixed together, is offered as the visitors say, "We have brought some milk and you must take a little." Even if he is unconscious,<sup>6</sup> a little of the milk will be put into the sick man's mouth, for a person should not die while holding any feelings of enmity toward

<sup>3</sup> Formerly the women would bring some little millet (*sa:me*, or *Panicum sumatrense*), now hardly grown.

<sup>4</sup> Toreyas should do this in a Gauda village, but by 1963 they were no longer willing to do so. However, in Gauda and Ha:ruva villages, these marks of respect might still be shown to the visitors by some Toreyas who are acting under instructions from the headman. If the group is small, the headman invites each individual by name, saying "Come along!" But if the group is large, he calls them as a group.

Until the early part of this century, there was a rather more complicated gesture of greeting. As a man came toward a visitor to take his stick or umbrella out of respect, the latter would throw it on the ground in front of him. Then, as the villager bent down to pick it up, the visitor, with both hands unencumbered, could touch the man's forehead and bless him before he had a chance to do the same. It is not so good to bless with one hand; greater sincerity is shown by using both. By the 1960s this elaborate form of greeting was going out of fashion.

<sup>5</sup> This restriction does not apply to immature young girls.

<sup>6</sup> If he is unconscious, then another man utters the blessings.

anyone in other villages, and taking some of their milk signifies there are no bad feelings. Then the visitors who are senior to the invalid bless him or her while touching his or her head, while those who are junior fall down and touch their heads to the sick person's feet as he or she, if conscious, blesses them (without moving).

While in the sick person's village, the visitors<sup>7</sup> must be fed. This meal is cooked on the yard (*ke:ri*) in front of a house by some young men. Women, who are the usual cooks at home, may not help in this task, except to carry the water and firewood. Once the meal is cooked, the visitors carry the food into various houses to eat.

After eating and staying a few hours, all of the visitors leave except for the close relatives among them. They remain there until death occurs. Every night until the person dies, the villagers make a lot of noise, chiefly by singing long epic ballads accompanied by a flute.<sup>8</sup> The singing, though common, is not compulsory and is certainly not a ritual requirement. No prayers or jokes will be contained in these songs. The main purpose of the singing, apart from entertainment, is to keep the people awake through the night as they tend to the sick, for Badagas say that if a man dies uncared for, it means he has no relatives.

The household watches for omens of death. If anyone dreams about buffaloes, it means that death is coming to the village in the near future, for in Hinduism, the god Hema or Yeman is thought to come riding on a buffalo when he lassos the soul of a pure man. He cannot be seen by mortals, yet dogs can see him, so if the village dogs start howling, it can mean that Hema is nearby. If a younger person in the house is very ill when his old parents hear a dog howl, one of them may pray that God let the child recover and take the parent's life instead. Some believe that such a prayer is sometimes granted.

When the person seems to be in the throes of death, a tiny old gold coin (a *Vi:rara:ya haṇa*) or silver 25-paise piece covered with butter or dipped in clarified butter used to be put in the mouth, to be swallowed if possible, or otherwise just remaining on the tongue. The butter is to give sustenance on the long final journey (Schad 1911: 2). Some dying people eagerly asked for the important coin (Rhiem 1900: 505; Thurston and Rangachari 1909, I: 111). Failing that, in earlier centuries, it was tied in a cloth to the arm or put in the mouth just after death; sometimes even two coins were swallowed (Harkness 1832: 131, note; Mörike 1849: 102; Natesa Sastri 1892: 833;

<sup>7</sup> If the afflicted family is very poor, this could be a burdensome expense for them, so the family's headman will call a meeting beforehand, during which he decides how much each household should contribute (in money and firewood) toward this meal. If the headman is wealthy, he may supply the meals himself.

The cooking may be done on any front yard except that which lies in front of the Great House, which will be required for other ritual activities and which would be polluted by the presence of the corpse. If priests are among the visitors, their food must be prepared in separate pots by men only, within a purified place such as the Great House, and it must be served to them immediately afterwards. For other visitors, the rice may have been prepared beforehand and kept ready in a heap. Only men serve the visitors, and no priest can be served from a pot from which anyone else, even another priest, has been served, unless several priests can be served simultaneously from the same pot. Priests may eat when visiting the sick but not during a funeral, because it is polluting.

Feeding of visitors (except priests) also occurs following a death (see below). In the same way, if the bereaved family is too poor to meet the expense, the headman will cover it by taking a levy from each household. In a case such as this, he will try to keep the costs low.

<sup>8</sup> The Badaga cane flute (*buguri*), with a range of two octaves, is made by a Toda friend. Women sometimes sing on these occasions. For an examination of epic poetry, see Hockings (1997).

Thurston and Rangachari 1909, I: 110). The coin is considered to be a fee for the guardian of the bridge that the soul must cross (Gover 1871: 66). If the coin is still put in the mouth by a family, then it must be placed there before the corpse leaves the house.<sup>9</sup>

## Preparation for the Ceremony

As soon as life is extinguished, drops of milk and butter are put into the mouth of the corpse: this constitutes permission from the relatives for the soul to depart. They also put a few grains of fox-tail millet (*Setaria italica*) with water into the mouth. These people must be ready to close the eyes of the dead and to straighten out the arms and legs. If Lingayat, they must cross the arms on the chest, close the mouth and eyes, and cross the legs in a sitting position—a posture of prayer—before rigor mortis ensues (Figs. 1a and b). The women do none of these things but rather begin wailing, shedding tears, and beating their breasts. They may also sing impromptu songs about the departed.<sup>10</sup>

Immediately, the headman is summoned and is offered a seat at the threshold. There the closest relative of the deceased says to him, “This corpse is for you.” With that, the headman becomes responsible for the conduct of the funeral, which is thus a communal and not a family affair. He talks with prominent villagers and decides how the funeral will be conducted, especially whether it will be held on the morrow or the day after. This depends on how far away the furthest relatives live, for before the days of buses, all relatives had to walk to the event. In remote villages, a funeral might even be delayed three or four days. Much-improved bus and taxi transportation today makes it possible to conclude the funeral on the day following death. The number of villages to be informed of the event is now decided according to the amount of resources the bereaved family has available (for feeding the likely guests).

The headman sends out groups of two or three messengers, each group going to several villages in one general area, to give news of the death and invite people to the funeral. It is not compulsory for every Badaga village in the Nilgiris to be notified unless the dead man was very important. The men go as a group because, at least in former times, individuals were afraid of Kurumba sorcery

<sup>9</sup> Today only a small minority of people follow the custom, since there have been too many cases of a person swallowing the coin and then recovering. The coin was originally a gold *hana* (or Canteroy fanam; Yule and Burnell 1903: 157–58) of about ¼-inch diameter, from the reign of Kaṇṭhirava Narsa Rāja of Mysore, 1638–1659 (Belli Gowder 1923–1941: 7). Today the coin would be made of silver, not copper or gold.

Kotas have the same custom of placing a *hana* in the mouth (Jagor 1914: 63).

<sup>10</sup> When a headman dies, a respected male member of his family will take charge of the funeral. After a week or so a new headman will be chosen from the same family, and usually he is the dead man’s son. The headman’s assistant (*gaundike*) does not become headman. Similarly, a dead assistant to a headman will be replaced by another male, generally one from his family.

If the man who died was someone of importance, invitations will be given to all of the Badaga phratries living nearby. For someone like a commune headman (*u:r gauda*), Badagas will be invited from all villages, since everyone knew him and quarrels might develop if certain villages are not invited. On the other hand, no one is ever invited from a village in which an epidemic is present.

If a man is ill, the headman will relieve him of messenger duty on this occasion but will ask him to assume this duty at a later one. But if a man simply cannot go because of a conflicting engagement, then it is he and not the headman who must find a substitute, either by paying that person or by agreeing to take up the duty whenever it is the substitute’s turn.

If a person dies outside his hamlet (*haṭṭi*), the corpse can be carried back to the hamlet from elsewhere in the same commune (*u:r*), but if he dies beyond the commune boundaries, it can never be brought back. In such a case the corpse is burnt or buried at the proper place in the hamlet in which the person died (this is called *ka:ḍu sa:vu*, forest funeral) or else is disposed of at the main grounds of the commune to which that particular hamlet belongs. In all such cases, and also in the burial of an infant, in which no rituals are performed, people come to the household later to express their condolences.

The relatives, however, bring back a handful of earth from that cremation or burial ground and later use it in

when traveling alone beyond their village boundary. Close relatives of the deceased are not chosen to be messengers, nor is the job now confined to Toreya servants of the headman (who received a small fee for each job they did; Thurston 1906: 190). The headman usually works along each line of houses in selecting appropriate messengers on these occasions. He keeps a record of who is sent where, so that the next time he has to send messengers on a similar task, he can quickly decide who should go to which place: those who did not go on the previous occasion will go the next time, those who went for long distances before will next just go short distances, and so on. If a household contains several male adults, the headman may select several messengers, while a house with only one adult male will be expected to send one messenger. Money to help meet the communal costs of a funeral, on the other hand, is levied in equal amounts from each household, regardless of how many members it has.

Close relatives will already know that the person has been sick, and so may have made some preparations for the funeral beforehand.<sup>11</sup> In particular, the natal village of a new widow has to make certain preparations; and so, if her village is at a considerable distance, relatives at the dead man's bedside will go straightaway to her village with the news. The spouse, parent, or son of the deceased is polluted immediately on hearing of the death, even if this relative is not then in the house where the death occurred, and such a person cannot then participate in some wedding or festival that is about to begin. The village headman, the *gauda*, will serve as the chief mourner (since this is to be a communal ceremony rather than a family one), and all other male participants will express their condolences to him. He has a cloth draped loosely over the head and sits on the bank in front of the house while the men come to him. All women who attend touch heads with a close female relative of the dead, who sits nearby on the veranda.

For an adult's funeral, the hamlet headman will invite anyone he wants to, but generally the invited will only be people from his own locality (*na:du*, one of the four quarters of the Nilgiri Plateau) and from those Badaga villages with which his village has affinal ties. A Toreya "village servant" (*u:r Toreya*), but not his family, may be invited to a funeral of any phratry: he will shave his head after the funeral of a Gauda phratry member. If he goes to announce the death in other hamlets, it is because of a fiction that he is the

a "dry funeral." For this ceremony the earth is tied in a cloth to the neck of a walking stick, and all the usual funerary rituals are then performed on the stick. If a person is eaten by a tiger, carried away in a flood, buried by government authorization after an autopsy, or burned as a plague victim (such that no corpse remains), the rituals can be performed over some object that the deceased was fond of or over a walking stick, in the case of a man, or a headband, in the case of a woman. And in earlier times, if a man disappeared, his relatives would wait 12 years to see if he might return. After that they held the dry funeral using a stick in place of the corpse. (Should he return, he was isolated from the community until a ritual of reinstatement had been performed.)

Following an epidemic during which many bodies may have been buried without ceremony, a communal disposal of walking sticks to which earth has been tied will occur. All will be placed on a single cot, then each family will do the obsequies for its particular member(s), and afterward a joint grain-placing ceremony is performed at the Funeral Grassland. Any affines among the dead are represented by sticks laid on a separate cot, and these receive a separate grain-placing ceremony. Those sticks representing the dead wives of affines also go on the affines' cot. As the cot stands in the yard of the Great House its head is oriented toward the west, and the sticks lie parallel to each other with their handles toward the west. They lie in order of generational level of the dead, with the seniormost to the south and the juniormost to the north. Within each generational level they are ranked according to actual age but are not separated by sex. This is relevant to those who will later be dropping grain on the sticks. Finally, depending on the custom of the phratry, all the sticks will be burned on one pyre or else will be buried in a pit. If buried, as is the commoner practice now, sticks for the oldest generation will lie to the east and those of the youngest to the west side of the pit. Within each generational level they are also ranked according to the actual age of each of the deceased.

There is a rare custom in the villages of Ke:ti commune whereby a small heap of leaves has to be thrown on the place where a corpse has rested while on the way back from one hamlet to its home. After that, any other passerby who sees this heap will pluck another leaf and add it to the pile. The leaves are of *hubbe*, with six distinct species (Hockings and Pilot-Raichoor 1992: 596).

<sup>11</sup> Affines of the dead must make an offering, called *tella:ti*. It can be presented at any time right up to the morning after the *korumbu* ritual (see below, pp. 58–60). For dead children, the gift must be cash; for adults, either cash or foodstuff, generally rice. Traditionally, the minimum sum for a dead child was 1 rupee and the maximum price was 10 rupees; for adults, the minimum was 5 rupees and the maximum 100, or else an offering ranging from one-half to two bags of rice was made. A wealthy donor might give bags of beans or *dhall* (legumes) instead. But the *tella:ti* is not really an outright gift, and records are kept of what is given by everybody; these offerings will have to be returned at some later funeral.

If a baby dies before it is named (on the 40th day), the body is treated like the afterbirth and is buried in the usual place without ceremony. If someone is prompted to ask the mournful family "Who died?", the answer must be "Nobody." In effect, an unnamed baby is not

"eldest son" of the deceased (who would indeed have addressed him archaically as *ida mane ma:ti*, "outer-room son"). Other Toreyas do not generally attend, nor would he want them to, lest they get a share of what he is to be given. This traditionally amounted to 5 rupees, 7 liters of grain, and some of the cloths from the canopy on the yard of the Great House or, alternatively, from the catafalque.<sup>12</sup> Toda and Kurumba tribal associates of the bereaved family are not required to attend, but the Kota associate (*muṭṭu Ko:ta*) must be present,<sup>13</sup> because he should supply music; at least he did so up until 1930. Nonetheless, at the funerals of important men, some Todas are also invited to attend. If they do so, they bring an embroidered shawl, a walking stick, and a bamboo milk container or other vessel, all of which they have made themselves (the embroidery being done by their womenfolk). There is no particular ceremony when the Todas arrive, and there is no ritual requirement that they must perform.<sup>14</sup> Their gifts are simply taken by some villagers and placed under the cot.

Because of the aforementioned threat of sorcery (not to speak of tigers in earlier times), the messengers leave only after dawn the next day, even if the deceased died 12 or more hours earlier. When they enter another commune with the news, they must go straight to the commune headman (*u:r gauda*) and tell him. In the case of the constituent hamlets (*haṭṭi*), on the other hand, it is sufficient if a messenger stands on a nearby hill-top and shouts the news, unless it is already evening, in which case he will have to go into the hamlet because people inside their houses, with the doors shut, would not hear him shouting from afar. No matter where he is delivering the news, he must stand with his turban under the left arm while he is doing so.

A major factional dispute that arose around 1930 between reformists and traditionalists centered on the propriety of dancing at a funeral, and thus of having a Kota band play music (Hockings 1980: 220).<sup>15</sup> Since that period, most Badaga families have abandoned the practice of inviting a Kota band, and indeed, Kotas today usually have something better to do with their time. Traditionally, though (as described below), it was a ritual requirement that some Kotas play music at every Badaga funeral or memorial ceremony, and the tradition is still sometimes observed by a more conservative family in certain villages. Accordingly, the headman of the bereaved village would send two men to invite the

a social being. Older children, on the other hand, who died in the 19th century were given a crude catafalque and most of the funeral ritual (Birch 1838: 104–5).

<sup>12</sup> A century ago, the Toreyas were reported to touch the feet of a corpse of a higher phratry and then to "worship" it (Natesa Sastri 1892: 834).

<sup>13</sup> If there has been a quarrel, the headman will send two of the most prominent men of his village to tell the Kota associate, should he refuse to come, that they will assume the responsibility for settling the issue. If Kotas cannot play because, for example, there is smallpox in their villages, then the Badaga has to get permission from the Kota headman before inviting a Kurumba or Irula band instead.

Well-to-do Badagas living near a boundary between divisions (*na:du*) may have two Kota associates, one in each region. Tanga:du, a Ha:ruva village in such a situation, had some 20–30 households that traditionally had two Kota associates each.

It is said that the cost of bringing a Kota band from another division could be triple what it would be in one's own locality because of the longer journey. A person in the bereaved village may therefore tell his relative in another locality, "I'll arrange a Kota band for you here, and you need not bring one." Such an arrangement would in fact mean that the headman would engage the Kota band and that the visitor from the other division would meet the costs. This is why, when a man in a distant village hears about the funeral, he may ask whether he can engage some Kotas nearby. Of course, he must make such arrangements immediately.

In a case where, as often happens, the same Kota is the associate to several of the dead person's kin, his band may play at different points in the funeral on behalf of different relatives of the dead—in which case the musicians are paid double. Only one band plays at a time when several are present. The associates of the dead person's brother's daughter's husband and brother's wife's father may also come, but their presence is not so important.

<sup>14</sup> At the funeral of a very important man, however, during the 19th century—someone like a divisional headman (*pa:rpati*)—such a large crowd of people would come from every village that Todas used to handle the crowd control (Lütze 1887: 13–14). At one such funeral the crowd was estimated at around 1,000, or about 7% of the entire population (Mörke 1857: 59–60). It was also reported that for such funerals, animals were sacrificed in the Toda manner. Thus, for the funeral of the paramount chief on September 25, 1878, "Many oxen were sacrificed" (Anonymous 1879: 7). In early times, the funeral of an important man was also marked by the constructing of a chariot with wooden wheels (*te:ru*), on which the corpse and catafalque were dragged both from place to place for the various rites and, ultimately, to the cremation ground. By the 1930s, if a Toda or a Kurumba associate were to attend a Badaga funeral, each would receive 4 annas (one-quarter Rupee) from the bereaved family.



Kotas, but before doing so, he would ask the bereaved family whether they currently had any quarrel with their Kota associate. If not, the men would go in search of him. On reaching the Kota village, they remove their turbans and put them under the left arm so that it is immediately evident why they have come. They stand near the sacred stones and normally just tell the Kota headman about the funeral. He says "I salute you, grandfathers!" and the others reply, "May you become great, father!" etc. Once the details are given, their work is finished. Then they wait on the grass there (as they would certainly not enter a Kota house for fear of pollution) while the headman goes around telling the other Kotas. The associates of the dead man, as well as those of his daughter's husband, wife's father, sister's husband, and son's wife's father (or son's wife's brother), and, for a dead woman, the associates of her brothers—who may in some instances be the same Kota man—are each expected to bring a set of musicians as a ritual requirement. These are called "bag-of-rice Kotas," and they would not come for a dead child under the age of 12 years. Such a Badaga might collect the band with his associate and first take the Kotas to his own village to feed them. Then, leading a horse<sup>16</sup> or riding on it while carrying a bag of rice, he would in former times proceed to the bereaved village with the Kota band ahead (Thurston and Rangachari 1909, I: 113). Without such a gift of grain, his arrival would be thought a disgrace.

When the two messengers return home, they will generally be accompanied by another set of six Kota musicians, each playing his instrument. But if a number of such bands have been called to the funeral, there may be less than the full complement of six in each.

When the Kotas cross the Badaga village boundary, the horn bearer and one frame drummer sound two horns several times to indicate that they are coming to the funeral (Fig. 5b). Then, as they get close to the village, they begin to play a lament, which continues until they reach the bereaved house and is intended to show that they too grieve. At the beginning of each row of front yards (which looks like a street; Hockings 1999, Pls. 8 and 14), a few mourning women come to meet the musicians. They hold their fingertips to their brows, weep, and cry, "O Kota friend, our father [mother] is dead!" and then fling themselves at the feet of the Kotas. As the music continues, male Badaga mourners, also crying, help the women up and lead the group to the bereaved

<sup>15</sup> While Wodeyas still had the Kota music at some funerals in 1963, they no longer danced around the corpse. For some years prior to that, most had stopped the music altogether.

<sup>16</sup> Nobody was obliged to come on horseback, although it was once the common means of transportation for better-off Badaga farmers. Any horse brought to a funeral would be left to graze on the village green or in some other public place. It was disrespectful to ride a horse onto any front yard, as this implied that the rider was superior to others there, nor could one cross the boundary onto a funeral ground on horseback.

house. The leading Kota bows down to the foot of the oldest male from the bereaved household. Another man gets a cup of water and pours it into the horns. This signifies (according to the Kota Sulli) that the Badaga is prepared to make the Kotas happy—that he will, in a sense, fill their horns. The players shake the water out and continue. They play a tune signifying “We are happy” and then a “sorrowful” tune while sitting on the veranda for perhaps 20 minutes, then they move to the opposite embankment beside the yard and play there. Meanwhile some women are preparing coffee for them. The Kotas sit talking and drinking on the embankment.

Those Kotas who come with the son-in-law of the deceased will wait just outside the village for the daughter’s subsequent arrival. They make a fire and heat their drums over it. If it is raining, they go to some dry place, such as a stable, where they can build a small fire to tighten the drums.

The Kotas play four kinds of instruments:<sup>17</sup> an oboe, a frame drum that is beaten with a pair of sticks, a barrel drum that is beaten with both hands, and a brass horn (Fig. 2b). The complete band includes six men, and the Kota associate is the seventh, the bandleader. One man carries the two horns, another plays the barrel drum, and the remainder play two oboes and two frame drums. Any Kota musicians coming to a Badaga funeral (and no other Kotas are likely to be invited) are paid a fee,<sup>18</sup> half of which comes from the Badaga inviting them and half of which comes from the bereaved household. More well-to-do Kotas do not like to go because they may have to play much of the night and sleep on the veranda. Over half a century ago, when the practice was still in full operation, poorer Kotas would seize the opportunity to play, because they might be fed for two or three days as well as receive measures of flour and a half-rupee each.

Another group of messengers, consisting of two to five experienced men, go to a bazaar, normally in the towns of Ootacamund, Coonoor, or Kotagiri, to purchase certain requisites. These would include flowers, rice, salt, chilies, and new cloth with which to decorate the traditional catafalque. The men use cash taken from the dead person’s household.

While waiting for the visitors to arrive, some Kota and Badaga men construct a catafalque (*gudikaḷ/gudikaṭṭu*), a framework of poles decorated with lengths of cloth (Fig. 7a). It is thought that the catafalque custom was adopted from the Kota tribe in early times. In villages with Toreyas,

<sup>17</sup> On other occasions Kotas play two other instruments, cymbals and a bass drum. Much of my information on Kota musicians comes from Mandelbaum’s interview with Sulli on May 28–29, 1937 (cf. his 1937 Fieldnotes). See Breeks (1873: Pl. 18) or Hockings (1980: Pl. 6) for illustrations of Kota musicians.

<sup>18</sup> If the bereaved family is rich, the musicians are paid in advance, whereas if they are poor, the Kotas may be paid on the day of the milk-pouring ritual. The money is given to the Kota associate, who does not play but who distributes the money among the band.

When coming to a Badaga wedding, the Kota band is paid two-thirds of its fee by the person bringing them to play and one-third by the groom’s household.

it was their task traditionally to make the catafalque (Natesa Sastri 1892: 834). Depending on the wealth of the bereaved family, it could have one, three, five, or even seven tiers (certainly not an even number).<sup>19</sup> Early in this century it was noted that "By the poorer members of the community the [catafalque] is replaced by a cot covered with cloth, and surmounted by five umbrellas" (Thurston and Rangachari 1909, I: 112; this has become standard today: Fig. 6b). Each tier is called *ko:l/ko:lu* (stick) and is made on a framework of eight sticks, two more sticks being crossed to form the base, the whole supported by four poles standing at the corners with, at the center of the structure, a long pole protruding from the top.<sup>20</sup> To this, one or more umbrellas are tied, their number suggesting the relative wealth of the deceased. No stick in the catafalque can have its ends bare but rather must have a pennant tied to the end, and others may be tied along its length (Thurston 1906: frontis.; Thurston and Rangachari 1909, I: 119, Plate; Hockings 1980: Pl. 13). The cloth brought by grandchildren of the deceased is used in this manner. One catafalque erected in 1887 for the dead divisional headman had cloth of red, blue, violet, and white material (Lütze 1887: 13–14; his descendant can be seen dancing in Fig. 3b, this book).

Inside the top tier and underneath the umbrella(s) is a large ball of hay that is covered with cloth (*kirimaguda*), about two feet in diameter. Without it the structure is not a proper catafalque, and it is then called a *gu:da:ra*, which is normally just a canopy one tier high. This latter may be constructed at the Great House, in a case where Kotas are not brought to a funeral, and is taken to be a rather shameful mark of poverty in the family.<sup>21</sup>

The basis of the simplest structure, the *gu:da:ra*, is the four corner poles and the central one, which are usually cut nearby, but a wealthy family may send for some bamboo poles from the plains, as they are both strong and light. The structure has to be portable, for it will go to the funeral ground.<sup>22</sup>

At the end of each funeral, all of the cloths and at least one pennant from each tier should be given to the Kota associate. Umbrellas, however, which are generally a mark of some status, are not given to him. Thus, when the catafalque is to be burned, the cloths and umbrellas are removed from it beforehand. A catafalque built for a dead woman may be hung with household utensils, "as for example a rice winnow, baskets filled with

<sup>19</sup> Seven was usual for the *manevale*, or memorial ceremony, but Tignous reported on one of 11 tiers that was 50–60 feet high (1912: 155). Eleven was the greatest possible number of tiers, although it would really be two stacks of three tiers on either side of a central stack having five tiers.

<sup>20</sup> The construction of a catafalque is hedged in by detailed rules about its framework, though not about the material (see Fig. 7a). This is because the catafalque has to be stable and to withstand winds, yet it cannot be set into the ground because it must be movable.

One umbrella, about 4 feet in diameter, will be bigger than the others, and it is called *bu:sakara kode* (guarding-the-whole-world umbrella). Above this may be a normal-sized umbrella, then a smaller lady's one, then a small silver one, and then a tiny gold one. This is not necessary with an incomplete catafalque, called *gu:da:ra* (Figs. 6a and b; see below).

Kotas have catafalques for their own funerals and burn them together with the corpse and the cot (Jagor 1914: 63).

<sup>21</sup> In the 1960s and more recently still, the more elaborate catafalque was being constructed for the funerals of very wealthy men of both the "music" and "non-music" factions: this amounted to less than a 20th of all funerals. Depending on the cloth chosen—usually cotton, but occasionally some silk too, for the pennants—the cost of each tier ranged from 100 to 200 rupees in 1970. The *gu:da:ra* I saw was a single-tier, pyramidal canopy; I have never seen a *gudikat*, and they have been very rare in the past 40 years.

<sup>22</sup> Long ago, a really wealthy family might have used sandalwood, obtained some time before, and would have allowed this to be burned later with the corpse. Ha:ruvas and Toreyas burn the catafalque with the corpse but keep the cot. Gaudas in the past burned the cot too, but nowadays there is usually a communal cot for the entire village, and so it has to be returned to the Great House. Woḍeyas and other Lingayats always bury their dead and generally keep the poles for re-use at another fu-

grain, coconut spoons, bamboo milk containers, gourds and a new rice pounder” (Jagor 1914: 43, trans.). A youth’s catafalque was “topped with a red flag and covered on all sides with candy, baked goods, fruits and other things like these” (Schad 1911: 3, trans.).

neral, when they will be covered with new colored cloths. Thus any Lingayat family needing these poles is simply given them, without any payment being made.

## The Funeral: Taking Away the Corpse

### Display of the Corpse

No one in the village works on the day of a funeral so that all can participate in it. When the corpse is ready to be taken out of the house, the Kotas (if present) play the taking-from-the-house music, and a cot is brought to the front yard<sup>1</sup> from any other house. The corpse is carried outside by several men and is placed on the cot: it must be in the family's own front yard, and this must occur between sunrise and sunset. Women fall down and wail. The Kotas give one sounding of the horn as the corpse is lifted and another as it is placed on the cot. The corpse is tied to the cot and a handbell is placed alongside it (see below, pp. 15–16).

If the dead person is male, his household gives the corpse new clothes, whereas if the deceased is female, the father, brother, or a more distant relative of the woman gives a new loincloth, upper cloth, head cover, and turban.<sup>2</sup>

There are several other articles that must be given to a corpse. All of them, like the loincloth, were traditionally supplied by the regional Chetti trader (*naṭṭu koṭṭu Seṭṭi*; Hockings 1980: 143–45) and are generally kept ready in a house. If not available when suddenly needed, the items can usually be borrowed from another household for a funeral.

Thus, any man, even if he is very poor, must provide a piece of cloth for his sister's corpse. If there is no brother, her father or other men from her natal village should offer the corpse the colored cloth (*e:baṇṇa*; Hockings 1979: 158). No affine may see the face of the corpse before this

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> If the person died on a Friday and the corpse is to be removed on Saturday, the latter is a very unlucky day, and so the corpse will require some "company" when it leaves the house. This will simply consist of a walking stick for a male corpse or a wooden door bolt for a female, which is laid on the cot. It is said that if this rite is neglected, there will be another death in the same house before the *korumbu* ritual in the following week. The Badaga antiquarian M.K. Belli Gowder stated that this rite should be observed on all the four inauspicious days of a week, namely Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday (Belli Gowder 1923–1941: 7; 1938–1941: 8), but another source said that no disposal should occur on Thursdays, and the saying I have recorded on the matter only refers to supplying a bolt on Saturday (Hockings 1988: 187, no. 249).

If the corpse is not to be disposed of on the day following death but on a later day, then it will be removed for the night to the veranda of the Great House (*dodda mane*). The catafalque remains in the front yard, and indeed, people will continue dancing around it at night. Meanwhile, the Kota musicians have to sleep on the veranda of the bereaved house, whereas the Badagas sleep in their homes. The location of the corpse is identical in every funeral: at the *sa:vu ke:ri*, funeral work-space.

The Great House is not the headman's house but rather that of the founder of the hamlet. It has quasi-temple status and is the home of some of the founder's descendants.

<sup>2</sup> If a woman has only one brother and he is dying, or if her elder brother is dying but it is likely that her other brothers will not respect her properly at her funeral because they have quarreled, then the dying man may give his healthy sister this piece of cloth in readiness for her funeral. She may have to keep it for years afterward, but she cannot use it for anything else.

particular cloth is laid across it. Even the man presenting it must hold it up before him in such a way that it is obscuring his view of the face until the moment when the corpse has been covered. The cloth signifies the saris that ancestral Badagas wore before they ever left Mysore District four centuries ago. It is torn down the middle somewhat so that it can be put over the head of the corpse to cover its back and front.

For either a male or female corpse, the daughter and her husband present the body with a special shawl<sup>3</sup> embroidered by a Toda lady. At least the eldest daughter must provide one, though several daughters may bring one jointly. When they arrive before the corpse, the Kotas are constantly winding their horns. The horse (if brought) is led around the catafalque three times, and then to the bereaved house. Now the daughter's husband bows at the feet of the corpse, while his wife cries, "O my dead Father [or Mother], your son-in-law has come and, crying, bows at your feet. Look at him!" The shawl (*bugu si:le*) that they brought is torn in half, one piece going on the corpse and the other laid on the cot. An embroidered shawl is not so essential an offering as is the colored cloth, and so this should be presented first and the shawl afterwards. It is wrapped round the body over the *e:baṇṇa*.

Another piece of cloth,<sup>4</sup> called *puka:śu*, is provided for a dead woman by the grandsons and granddaughters. It first ought to be given inside the house, so while the body is still there, the gift may be made by the sons' sons or sons' daughters. The daughters' sons or daughters' daughters often present another *puka:śu* later on the front yard outside, because by the time they have come from their home villages, the corpse has already been moved outside. The person making the offering rolls it up and carries it on the head while crying, "O Father [or Mother], where have you gone?"<sup>5</sup> A dead woman does not merit this offering unless she has a grandchild by a son, daughter, stepson, or stepdaughter.

Few Badagas now own a horse or pony, but one used to be involved in the ritual for a dead woman from any phratry except the Woḍeyas. Her brother's son's son or else her brother's son, provided he was still a small boy, was put on horseback and led once around the corpse in a counterclockwise direction. The boy carried the *puka:śu* on his head. When he got off the horse, he put the cloth at the head of the cot, which was still lying on the yard. Another person hung it on the catafalque.

<sup>3</sup> Such shawls (*bugu si:le*), bought long beforehand, are embroidered in a very shoddy manner if it is known that they will eventually be used in a Badaga funeral. The man must offer one to the corpse before he touches its feet and his own forehead. It is placed over the corpse with the embroidered end toward the head, a feature distinctive of death, since, when men in the Nilgiris sleep with such a shawl covering them, they have the embroidered end over their legs, never over their heads.

The elder daughter may have a costly one made and may have her sisters share the cost with her, or they may decide to split the obligation so that some daughters will provide the shawl for their mother and the rest will provide one for their father. As it is generally made far in advance of death, their father may see it before he dies, if he wishes. His daughters may even put it on the sick man, telling him that if he gets well he may wear it, and then they will have another one made (Hockings 1999: 75–76).

Should the daughter's husband be ready to present the cloak before this other cloth is on the corpse, then he must wait until the latter has arrived. If there is no daughter's husband living to present the cloak to the corpse, then a daughter's husband's brother will do it.

A dead woman's daughter often may be her brother's son's wife at the same time. Hence, if she has no living brother or parents, her brother's son must present the colored cloth. Yet in this particular case, the same man is *also* the daughter's husband, and in that role he must offer the embroidered cloak to the dead woman too; in doing so, nonetheless, he must present the colored cloth first.

If it happens that a close relative urgently wants to see the dead woman but he has no *e:baṇṇa* with him, someone else will cover the face of the corpse until he has gone through the motions of the rite using his own kerchief or body cloth.

<sup>4</sup> The cloth is offered first by the sons' children, then by the daughters' children. If they are too young to understand, the cloth is tied round their heads and then they are carried once around the catafalque or are told to walk around it counterclockwise. After this, the cloth is tied to the catafalque. If a son's daughter or daughter's daughter cannot come to the funeral because she has just married or is away at college, then another girl must give a *puka:śu* on her behalf. Woḍeyas do not give it at their funerals.

<sup>5</sup> Since there is no taboo associated with naming the dead, as there is among Todas, those Badagas who had called the living person by his or her name (this depends on kin relationship) will continue to do so after death.

Once the body is on the front yard, a brass plate full of food that the dead person had enjoyed, along with curry and rice—but always vegetarian food—is brought out (Fig. 1b). A gourd is left near the feet for the dead to drink from during the coming journey (Metz 1864: 77). If it is a woman who has died, her mother or brother's wife ties a bead necklace<sup>6</sup> (*kakkila maṇi*) and a bead wristlet (*kai kaṭṭu maṇi*) on the body. One or sometimes two hanks of human hair, called *savari* (Hockings 1979: 155, 160), with a comb (to tie up the hair behind the head) are attached. Female corpses are also given a string (*ode kaṇṇi*)<sup>7</sup> to hold the cloth in place over the breasts, and a strip of cloth (*kacce*) about 9 inches wide and 2 yards long to serve as a waistbelt. The latter has a colored border along one side and is of white cotton, with the ends embroidered in black and red.<sup>8</sup>

The corpse,<sup>9</sup> still lying on its bed, is dressed in these new clothes, and the turban is tied on. The women never touch the corpse. At least one copper coin should be put into the pocket of the cloak by a relative or by some agnatic villager. Also, while dressing the corpse, men used to cut off one corner of the cloak and give it to a Toreya. Because of the cessation of their servile status, this cloth is now given to some non-Badaga, a Harijan. At the same time, a string (*sa:vu kaṇṇi*) that is a quarter inch thick and about a yard long is tied around the head under the chin and over the turban to keep the mouth from opening (Hockings 1979: 159, 170). It is made of dyed red cotton but ends in blue cotton, with four conical buttons of bone tied on each end.

When a man has died, his widow is dressed well for the funeral, “almost as a bride.” She does not wear the usual round nose ring but a rather special funereal one that hangs down from the nostril by about 1 to 1½ inches.<sup>10</sup> The affines, her relatives, give her a cloth called *muccuku si:le*, “meant to cover her face while weeping” (i.e., mourning; Natesa Sastri 1892: 833).<sup>11</sup> The presentation of this is said to represent a final marriage of the deceased. The widow covers her head with this cloth and, led by Kota musicians, goes with the affinal visitors, her relatives, from the edge of the front yard to the corpse. As in a wedding, they shout *o: hau hau*, which is a cry to ward off the inauspiciousness, but—unlike at a wedding—they have to go around the catafalque three times in a counterclockwise direction. Only after this ritual has been performed may the widow sit on the cot beside the corpse, the first moment she has been near it since the death.

<sup>6</sup> A *kakkila maṇi* is a necklace of small black beads; a *kai kaṭṭu maṇi* is a wristlet of tiny cylindrical red beads (Hockings 1979: 160).

<sup>7</sup> This is a string of double thickness, about a yard long, and the two cords are bound together at three places with blue cotton. At each end are ten baubles and over these is a blue cotton thread.

<sup>8</sup> All of these items were traditionally supplied by the regional Chetti trader (Hockings 1979: 159–60, 167).

<sup>9</sup> Most Lingayats and nowadays some Gaudas wash the corpse before dressing it, but Woḍeyas do not. A dead priest is treated as an ordinary villager, and so his corpse bears no symbols of office.

If a small girl has died, her ears and nose are touched or pierced with a pin, in order to simulate the girls' piercing ceremonies, before the corpse is taken from the front yard. People may also draw tattoo marks with charcoal on the brow and wrists, where a pubescent girl would, in fact, have been tattooed.

If a person dies just as an important festival is about to begin in the village, and that village happens to be the head village of a commune, then the funeral is finished in a hurry; or better, it is postponed until the day after the festival, and the corpse is then kept inside the house. The festival is, after all, being held for all of the constituent hamlets rather than just one of them. In any other hamlet, however, either the festival or the funeral will be postponed according to the decision of the elders. Because of the pollution associated with the latter, there could never be both a festival (auspicious event) and a funeral (inauspicious event) going on in the same village simultaneously. The only exception to this rule is that if a festival, such as the salt-giving to buffaloes (Hockings 1968), is finished in the morning, a funeral could start immediately afterward.

<sup>10</sup> Important families may keep one of these special rings (*koḍḍiṅgi*) and may lend it to widows when needed. The practice is not followed in the Porangaḍu area.

<sup>11</sup> They may also choose to show their affluence by presenting costly cloths to the daughters and sisters of the dead man.

Until the corpse has been moved outside and the house purified, no one may prepare any food there.<sup>12</sup> Upon arrival, therefore, the Kotas are given coffee or food that has been made in some other household (with the costs of its preparation borne by the bereaved family). From this point on, the main job of the Kotas is to play processional music in front of the corpse each time it is moved. Only those musicians brought by the associate of the dead man are required to meet all of their ritual obligations, although other Kotas may do so if they wish. It is also a ritual requirement for male visitors to dance barefooted to the Kota music. This dancing is done to please the participants and not the departed soul.<sup>13</sup> Although the man who brings a set of Kotas has only met half of their cost, he has full control over them and has the privilege of dancing to their music until he says, "I give my Kotas to you," thereby releasing their services to the headman.

People do not dance on the front yard before the bereaved house. The cot is eventually moved from that location to one in front of the Great House.<sup>14</sup> This functions, for the time being, as a funerary temple where people may dance. As the corpse is moved, the Kotas sound their horns and lead the procession with music. If the corpse is to be disposed of that day and people have built a catafalque for it, then corpse and cot are put inside this catafalque from the east side. Once the corpse is inside the catafalque, someone says, "Stop, don't cry any more: now we are going to dance. Father, change the tune and play a dance song." The Kotas then answer, "Very well, Grandfather." So they play the five dance tunes in order: first, "foot-raising-and-putting-down," then the "turning dance," "lively dance," "jumping tune," and "walking dance." Afterward they continue playing these tunes in any order. People must dance around the cot<sup>15</sup> at least once, and only then are they free to dance on other parts of the front yard as Kotas play in the middle of the circle of dancers (Figs. 3 and 4). The Kotas present never dance. The corpse is placed at one end of the yard, not in the middle, so that there will be plenty of room for dancing (in those villages where this still occurs). The dances move in a counterclockwise, inauspicious direction (whereas at temple festivals and other auspicious ceremonies, they move in a clockwise direction). Benches are placed along either side of the cot for female mourners to sit on (Fig. 8a). Some of them have brought puffed amaranth, puffed barley, puffed rice, and millet flour puffs cooked in oil in baskets decorated with

<sup>12</sup> An elderly postmenopausal woman (not the widow) purifies the floor by sprinkling a cow-dung solution. On the night after the corpse has been removed, and regardless of whether it has yet been disposed of, a light must be kept burning constantly in the house (this is not necessary on following nights, however). If the funeral occurs on the day of an adult's death, there must be lights in both that house and in the one from which the grain mixture is distributed. If two days are involved altogether, however, a light is only necessary in the latter house on the second night.

<sup>13</sup> In an overly dramatic and false account of the funeral, however, where he claimed that the dancing "degenerates into an indecent romp, a mad *cancan*," the noted French geographer and anarchist Élie Reclus stated that the vigorous dancing "is to assist the departed, to communicate strength to her. . . . She has, she will have, great need of it on the long journey" (Reclus 1885: 205). Grigg (1880: 227) too spoke of the dancing "growing wilder and wilder as the day draws towards its close."

<sup>14</sup> If there is to be a festival in the near future, then the front yard of the Great House will probably be needed, and it cannot be polluted by a just-concluded funeral. In such instances, there is a designated second Great House, often next door to the Great House and typically belonging to descendants of the younger brother of the village's founding ancestor or to the founding ancestor of the bereaved lineage, and that is where the funeral activities will then occur.

<sup>15</sup> Members of all but one phratry may dance, and men may then wear turbans. Wodeyas stopped dancing around 1950. Anyone dancing or performing another function at a funeral may not wear a turban. It is also the rule that at least one male relative of the deceased must remain bareheaded throughout the funeral, although as a sign of mourning he should cover his head loosely with a cloth (*si:le* or *dupaṭi*). The commune headman, on the other hand, may wear a turban. Even he will be bareheaded for the funeral of his own father, mother, son, or wife. He can, however, wear a turban at his daughter's funeral, as he is an affine to her village.

Very close relatives of the dead should not wear turbans and should go without food (except for fruit and coffee) from the time of death until the disposal of the corpse. They should neither touch nor drink milk, even in their coffee.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, shots were oc-



flowers, which are placed under the cot (Thurston and Rangachari 1909, I: 117, Plate). The dead man's milking vessel is also there, and cigarettes, beedies, snuff, cigars, or chewing tobacco may be brought, according to his tastes—perhaps, too, a favorite walking stick, bow and arrow (formerly), or flute will be included.<sup>16</sup>

As groups of visitors arrive, the men remove their footwear out of respect and walk onto the yard, chanting “o: hau hau” repeatedly, as they scatter around puffed rice and perhaps coins of the smallest denomination. Next, after removing their turbans, they pay respects to the corpse. They go to the head if they are of a more senior generation or of the same generation as the deceased but older in age; alternatively, they go to the feet if they are of a more junior generation or of the same generation as the deceased but younger in age. Whenever there are no men around the cot, women pay their respects too. After some time, the headman invites the Kotas to take a rest and eat a meal outside the neighboring home of some of the bereaved relatives. Since Badagas are concerned about the pollution believed to derive from Kotas, the youngest of the Kotas has to throw away the leaves off which they have eaten. Afterward they play some more, and then rest on the veranda while some Badaga women may perform a comic song to relieve the sadness. Young men sit and listen. Later they ask the Kotas to perform more dance music, but may have to offer extra money to persuade them. In the evening, if the funeral is going to continue for more than one day, the Kotas may sleep on the veranda or take their instruments and walk back home by moonlight. In the latter case, the headman may have to go and bribe them next morning to return for the rest of the funeral by promising them a buffalo.

During the whole time the corpse is on display like this, and while visitors are still coming to pay their respects, the corpse, whether male or female, should be tended by a daughter or a sister or, if there is none, by a classificatory daughter. Only when a male corpse is moved to the village green does the female relative leave it. She may fan flies off the face, and from time to time she picks up a handbell and rings it next to the head (Fig. 1b; Thurston 1906: 191). There is a saying, *Mande:rsi iddu maṇi hudaya* (Staying beside the head, the woman rings the bell), which suggests that she is there to offer some companionship to the deceased in its loneliness. I had great difficulty getting any further explanation for this bell ringing beyond the fact that it was a “tradition.” But

casually fired during dancing, such as “from an old musket which may have come from the time of Haidar Ali” (Mörke 1849: 103).

<sup>16</sup> Betel is rarely offered, as its chewing has been taken up by Badagas only over the past century. Jagor (1876: 198) gives probably the first reference to it, although betel leaf is also mentioned in proverbs. Lütze (1887: 14) mentions a cigar, which is thrust into the mouth of a dead headman, and a plate of food that is placed under his chin. If a woman was in the habit of smoking, someone may later put a pipe with tobacco in her grave or on the funeral pyre.

eventually someone explained<sup>17</sup> that once an apparently dead person had sat up when the cremation began. This bell ringing, and the later swinging of the body three times over the fire or grave prior to cremation or burial, are seemingly precautionary tests long taken in case the person is cataleptic but not yet dead.

If the funeral continues for two days, as seldom happens now, a group of women will sit around the corpse at night, crying and occasionally singing. They keep a fire going in the yard nearby and are relieved by a second group in the middle of the night.

Particularly now that most funerals have no Kota music, records or tapes may be played through loudspeakers instead. Even a spring-wound gramophone is brought out sometimes. Loud, gay music can help cheer the crowd and somewhat drown out the wails of the women who are seated next to the cot. Every so often these are replaced by another few women mourners.<sup>18</sup> Saivite hymns (*bajana*) in Tamil may also be sung nowadays.

The face and feet of the corpse (unless it is Lingayat) remain uncovered all day so that senior and junior people can pay their respects to the deceased. The first people to do so are the members of the host village, who come for this purpose as soon as they hear of the death. Even if they have already blessed the person while he or she was dying, they do so again. Regardless of what their ages might be relative to the deceased, men and women of the same generation touch<sup>19</sup> the head, whereas all those of junior generations, together with any Toreyas at another phratry's funeral, touch the feet (Thurston 1906: 191). Immediately after doing so, men but not women touch their own foreheads.

The male visitors at a funeral are mostly affines (*naṭṭa*) from other villages, people who have married women from this bereaved village or provided it with brides. Some, of course, are close relatives of the widow or widower. Once they have touched the head or feet of the corpse by way of respect, they have no further obligations, and so they will start dancing<sup>20</sup> with the Kota musicians that some of them have brought.

There are special rules for showing respect to the dancing affinal visitors that would not apply in weddings or festivals. As these men dance in a curving line, the central man has the place of greatest respect, while all the others are ranked in decreasing order on either side of him, thus: 8 6 4 2 1 3 5 7 9. It does not matter in which di-

<sup>17</sup> This is no mere facile rationalization, for in a cremation at the beginning of the 20th century, the corpse was seen by my informant's friend to urinate and then to sit up; that man lived for another half century! But evidently fortune has knocked twice, for the Todas have a comparable story to match the same practice: "They say that long ago, about 400 years, a man supposed to be dead was put on the funeral pyre, and revived by the heat, he was found to be alive and was able to walk away from the funeral place" (Rivers 1906: 363).

<sup>18</sup> Jagor caught the essence of their mourning well:

"At times the corpse was addressed: 'Didn't you always give to the poor? Weren't you always a good mother?' This is followed by the assent given in chorus by the women. Tears flow plentifully. Some women seem particularly moved and place the dead person's tobacco, betel, pepper and sugar in a small twisted cornet made of a leaf which they close with [two] of the fingertips. Women and children put their heads together and wail. The corpse's face is fanned and the flies chased away from the body" (Jagor 1876: 198, trans.).

<sup>19</sup> The catafalque (*guḍikaṭ*) is recognized as being a temporary funerary abode (*guḍi*). Anyone entering a house where a corpse lies or who touches the dead loses his state of purity (*sudda*). For that reason, too, a priest or a headman wearing a ring of office (and therefore equivalent to a priest) does not touch the corpse. Both it and the wrappings pollute anyone who comes in contact with them, as does touching any part of the catafalque.

<sup>20</sup> In every quarter (*na:ḍu*), the commune headman (*u:r gauḍa*) should dance at a funeral. Other than any Wodeyas present, he alone will be wearing a turban while dancing. Generally, when a commune headman starts to dance, a special tune is played for him, and he should then dance for at least a couple of minutes. He dances in the middle of a line of men, who thereby show respect to him.

Other people who are wearing turbans must take them off while dancing and when carrying the corpse. Thurs-

rection the line is moving. There must always be a man from the host village at each end to signify the superiority of the visitors. Without these, the affines would refuse to dance. Older men dance around only once or twice, for the sake of the ritual obligation, whereas visiting youths will dance long and energetically, some hoping that their performance will catch the eye of a local girl (Figs. 3a and b).<sup>21</sup>

At least one woman should dance with the men and many may. The woman must be an agnatic relative to the man who is conducting the funeral, such as a classificatory daughter. In O:rana:yi village during a 1926 funeral, the women formed a complete circle and were doing their own special dance, but the Kotas objected to this style on the grounds that at least one man should be dancing with them. Apart from this case, women only dance in front of their husband or son (or between them if both are dancing together).<sup>22</sup>

Once a group of visitors feels that they have finished dancing with the Kotas they brought along, they hand them over to the hamlet headman. Those visitors who have brought Kota musicians can go on dancing with them as they please, but others must wait until the headman calls them out to dance. He actually has a list of all the invited villages and, standing in the middle of the front yard, he calls them out to dance one village at a time, as sets of Kota musicians (including perhaps his own set) become available.

During this period of dancing, the dead person's daughters' husbands might still dance with some of their friends in a special dancing dress, a pleated skirt with red, yellow, or blue dentate borders, originally supplied by an itinerant Chetti (and now extremely rare). They may or may not choose to wear huge turbans and a loose jacket at this time (Figs. 3a and 5a; Thurston and Rangachari 1909, I: 119, Plate). Dancing in this dress for a while was a ritual requirement, as confirmed by the fact that before dancing, they touch the ground with one hand and exclaim "*So:mi!*—Lord!" But the daughters' husbands, being affines, only do it after men from the host village, the agnates, have done so. All men who give the *e:baṇṇa* cloth or an embroidered shawl were once expected to wear this dress briefly to dance in. They include men attending a funeral of their WM or WF, FZ or FZH, D or DH, SD or SDH, FFZ or FFZH, or WFB or WFBW, all of whom are thus affines from another village (unless, perhaps, in former days, of the Wodeya phratry). If nec-

ton (1906: 191) states that they would remove their turbans or woolen caps out of respect for the first three rounds of dancing only.

<sup>21</sup> Children are not supposed to dance at a funeral; women may, but less often do. When women do dance, men dance in a circle with the women dancing inside, each woman keeping close to a male relative.

<sup>22</sup> A childless widow who obviously has no such relatives will dance with men from her *natal* village, originally her agnates.

essary, these affines waited on the front yard until some agnates had danced in the special dresses.

Early in the afternoon of the funeral day, while hot drinks or sweets are being brought around to people and dancing is about to end, the Kota associate makes an offering to the corpse. If the deceased was a Lingayat, he gives an iron toe-ring for the second toe of each foot; if the deceased was a non-Lingayat, he gives an axe with a bow and arrow. This is to protect the departed soul during the journey to the afterworld. The bow<sup>23</sup> is made of iron and string, with a wooden arrow tipped with iron. For Lingayats, the Kota must also offer a hoe, which is used later to dig the grave.<sup>24</sup> In either case, he goes to the end of the front yard with a Kota band. Some of the dead person's family or fellow villagers go up to the Kota, and each takes one of the tools he has brought. If the Kota is only a boy, he bows to the feet of the Badagas. They carry these items on their heads, with the blades pointing upward, and cry for the deceased as they walk three times around the corpse in a counterclockwise direction, followed by the Kota associate and then the band. After going around the cot, the Badagas put the various tools under it. At a Lingayat funeral, the Kota puts the rings on the toes of the deceased, whether male or female (Thurston and Rangachari 1909, I: 117, Plate). While carrying the tools around, men of the senior generations should precede more junior ones. In the toe-ring-, bow-, and grain-giving rituals, however, the people who proceed around the corpse may not be of a more senior generation than the dead.

After everyone has danced to his satisfaction, the last round must be danced by all the males of the host village, or, if it is a woman who has died, the male affinal visitors must dance last, accompanied by at least two men from the host village (as was explained above). "After the sun has passed its zenith, the spirit of the deceased is supposed to have entered heaven, and the dancing ceases" (Metz 1864: 78). I doubt it has got quite so far (cf. Chap. 3).

In every village, a few large East India Company silver rupees are still kept. After the dancing is over, one of these rupees is stuck in the center of the brow of the corpse, male or female, using a white paste from the gum-thistle (Figs. 1a and b).<sup>25</sup>

Although the affines should bring Kota musicians, they are not expected to bring anything else to the funeral unless it is a woman who has died. Then they must bring at least one winnow, one

<sup>23</sup> The Lingayats, all vegetarians, never hunted. Today, when no bows are in use, if one is urgently needed for this ritual offering, someone makes a very rough one out of sticks and string and tips an arrow with something like a broken knife. Nowadays the toe-ring is commonly made of silver, nickel, or copper.

This presentation for non-Lingayats is called *bil sa:stira* (bow ritual); that for Lingayats is *miccu sa:stira* (toe-ring ritual).

<sup>24</sup> See below, p. 20, and Figure 2a. Today the Kotas will just borrow some old hoe while in the Badaga village. They always smear it with mud to signify that it is new before they present it.

<sup>25</sup> This is *e:gore*, or *Euphorbia rothiana*. Thurston (1906: 190; Thurston and Rangachari 1909, I: 112) reported a silver Japanese yen being used in this way and said that two coins might be on the brow. The Wodeyas do not put a coin on the brow, but for a male, it is tied to the arm along with some cooked rice. Among the

coconut-shell ladle, and one pounding stick (probably not a genuine one, which today is very valuable) to present to their dead daughter or sister. When these affines perform their last dance, they do so while carrying these kitchen implements on their heads and then they give them to villagers, who place them under the cot. Only after this ritual has been completed can a member of the family ask the affines' permission to dispose of the corpse.

During a wedding it is usual to affirm, as a ritual form, that the bride's father still "owns" her until her death. This is one point that suggests that she is not totally absorbed into her husband's family, lineage, and clan. (She will, after all, return to her father's house to give birth.) Therefore, after they have finished dancing at the woman's funeral, some of her visiting male relatives, affines to her husband's family, wait outside her house. Before the woman's corpse is removed from the yard, one or more of these men are invited into the house, asked to sit on jute or some other prestigious material, and offered a glass of water. Then the widower or another close male relative in the family says to the visitors, "You see, your daughter is dead. Please do not ask us for her at some later time." Each affine present then touches the man's forehead (or, if the affine is very young, bows down to his feet), blesses him, and says, "You can remove it" (Belli Gowder 1923-1941: 9).

Women who live in the village and who are related to the dead man or the widower as brother's wife or father's wife (or father's brother's son's wife, etc.) bring some baskets of millet and wheat, with which they make sweets. Three or more of the women must then take these on plates held on their heads and proceed around the catafalque at least once counterclockwise, wailing as they do so. When they come to the head of the corpse, they place these plates under the cot there. Once these village women have finished, the wives<sup>26</sup> of affinal visitors will do the same thing. Women do not handle the corpse, but a woman can touch her head to that of the dead, and after doing so, she must (generally while seated) touch her head against that of any other female nearby. The two do this for at least a minute while bewailing the dead.

Among Lingayats, on the day of the burial, just after midday, the oldest man<sup>27</sup> of the oldest generation in the village is sent to the burial ground with a crowbar, which had previously been placed underneath the cot inside the dead person's house.

other Lingayats, after this rupee has been stuck to the brow, all the tools for digging the grave will be placed under the cot. If the dead is a female, decorative items are tied into her body cloths. Mörike (1849: 104) observed gold and silver finger rings and earrings and several rupees tied to the arms, as well as silver chains wound around a man's neck and waist.

<sup>26</sup> Those coming from nearby villages will already have prepared the sweets at home and will carry them on their heads to the funeral. Others may make the sweets just before offering them. None of these wives will come out onto the front yard until the local women have completed this ritual activity.

<sup>27</sup> Among Wodeyas, this man need not be someone of prominence, but he should be a person from the Great House, even if only a small boy.

The Lingayat burial grounds and the path leading to them are cleaned only on the actual day of a burial; it

A few other village men follow him, each carrying a wooden pole. The other men, each of them, then turn to remove the shroud. They go first to the funeral ground, where the corpse will usually rest. There the old man sits down for a few minutes and then gets up again and all the others with him follow him. This is said to be done in order to give people time at the house to change should they need to send a messenger saying that the departed is not dead after all. Then they go to the burial ground where they select a spot for the grave. At this point the old man picks up the crowbar and digs into the spot. He must not remove it, however, another man immediately takes the crowbar out of the ground and then digs it into the earth several times more. After the stabbing ritual they march out the grave properly and straightaway dig the pit, as the funeral is proceeding in the village. They usually use a hoe (guddali, Hockings 1988: 60) for the work but now they just use it mainly because of tradition and then they shovel some soil. "The men take turns at digging, one or two at a time. They do not allow any non-Langayals to dig a grave. Affines may help with the digging but they must not perform the shrouding ritual here. It is said that the man who does it must have at least one grey hair on his head."

A Langayat grave is some six feet deep and it is conventional to make it about six feet long too. Since at least two men will have to get into it to put the corpse in the correct position. The pit is oriented in the north-south direction and is generally three to four feet wide but very rich Langayals will need much bigger graves if cows are to be buried with them.

## The Procession

Later, shortly before the corpse is to be removed from the yard (or, in some cases, the Great House), a play offering of plantain, coconuts and incense may be made at the foot of the cot, seemingly for anyone of the soul. Then the headman says, "Let us take our corpse" and the Kotas blow their horns. They play a tune called *awa-we-aw-tak* (see the corpse). Each time the corpse has to be moved it must be done with the feet of the corpse extended toward the front of the procession, and the corpse must be carried by men of that village, never by affines. The procession moves away, led

by a man, requesting that no bushes or weeds be created away from the area at any other time. In the old days people believed that such work would be ill-fated - that if the path and the burial ground were always kept clear, many funerals would pass that way. Hence the cleaning is done by some men once the crowbar ritual has been completed. The burial ground should never be cultivated, but cattle may graze on it.

Harkness (1852: 152, note) explains the significance of the crowbar in the funeral. "They think that iron has a repulsive power over the spirits that hover about the dead. It is a widespread belief in Eurasia."

Since about 1900, it has been the only digging tool still supplied to the Langayals by their Kota associates.

"It is a very bad omen if, while digging, the men find a large stone that they cannot remove, for it means that the deceased has a heavy burden of sin. They will have to enlarge the pit, because they cannot dig another one now that the crowbar ritual has been performed and the grave designated."

The same grave should not be dug out afresh, but nowadays, for lack of space in many cemeteries, this happens. Langayat men at least remember where the graves are so that they do not dig up recent burials. If bones are found while digging, they are kept on one side and later when the fresh corpse is in the grave and all the rituals have been completed to make it into a *lungu*, these old bones - most likely wrapped in a cloth - are put in on top of the corpse. Then the grave is filled.

This is only true of villages in the Mekunadu and Kande quarters.

by these musicians, followed by the corpse on its cot, and then by the parts of the disassembled catafalque, and finally by the villagers and visiting affines.

Cardinal directions are significant here, as in Hinduism generally (cf. Drawing 1). Whenever the corpse is resting in the front yard or on the village green, its head is toward the threshold of the house (generally toward the west) and its feet are toward the east (but sometimes the head is toward the north). It is put inside the catafalque from the east side and is later removed from the west side. If, however, it remains on the veranda of the Great House overnight, the head will be to the south and the feet to the north (like its position in the grave).

Only if the corpse is male and if it is to be disposed of on the same day will it go to the village green<sup>32</sup> early in the morning for the milk ceremony (*tur sa:stira*). The Kotas stand nearby and play a "corpse-bringing-catching-cow" tune on the oboe. At that place (a patch of grass within the village), a milking buffalo, preferably one that belonged to the dead man, is led counterclockwise around the corpse three times; the corpse is now lying on the ground with the feet pointing toward the south. A man of the village who is related as classificatory brother or father leads the hand of the dead until it touches the udder and then directs a small amount of the milk into the mouth of the corpse.<sup>33</sup> A peg is driven in the ground nearby and the buffalo is tied to it until the next move of the cot. Then, one of the dead man's oxen is brought along and some grain is put on its back so that it may drop off around or onto the corpse. The corpse's right hand is made to touch either one of the animal's horns three times.<sup>34</sup> Once the corpse has been brought back in a procession and replaced in the catafalque, which is still in the front yard of the Great House, the men will dance around it. Already the affines have done so on the village green after the milk ceremony, but now is the first time that everyone, other than visiting affines, is allowed to dance.<sup>35</sup>

The next step (assuming the corpse is to be disposed of on the same day) is to remove the body on its cot to the Funeral Grassland, where again it lies with its head to the west and its feet to the east, and with the catafalque standing nearby. As people reach it, they remove their shoes out of respect. Here, too, the Kotas play their music. The Lingayats, who burn neither corpse nor bed, and the rest of the Badagas would now dismantle the catafalque and give cloths from it to the Kotas.

<sup>32</sup> The village green is called *hattane*. The catafalque remains on the front yard. In Sulli's 1937 account of this rite, seven bulls or oxen were brought to the corpse, six were led around the corpse three times and then driven off. One animal was held by the horns while a little boy, held by a man on each side, rode around three times on the seventh bull. He carried a quarter bag of little millet, which he poured out over the corpse. Then the hand of the corpse was placed on the horn of that bull. Often, because rigor mortis had set in, the hand would not move, so the man simply touched it and then touched the horn. If necessary, some affines caught and held the animal, and this corresponds to the Toda rule that men of the opposite moiety to that of the deceased must catch their buffaloes (Rivers 1906: 351). It was reported earlier that "two or three buffaloes may be let loose, and one of them captured, after the manner of the Todas, brought near the corpse, and conducted round the cot" (Thurston 1906: 190). Capturing these animals used to be a way for visiting affines to show off their strength (Mönke 1857: 60).

This was not done, however, at Wodeya funerals.

"The buffalo catching, and leading the animal round the corpse, are omitted. But a steer and a heifer are selected, and branded on the thigh, by means of a hot iron, with the lingam and other emblems. Bedecked with cloths and jewels, they are led to the side of the corpse and made to stand on a blanket spread on the ground. They are treated as if they were lingams, and *pūja* is done to them by offering coconuts and betel leaves, and throwing flowers over them. Round their necks *kankanams* (marriage threads) are tied. They are made to turn so as to face away from the corpse, and their tails are placed in the hands thereof. An elder then proceeds with the recitation of the dead person's sins" (Thurston 1906: 198-99; Thurston and Rangachari 1909: 1121).

<sup>33</sup> *Ha lu hi njadu*. "Thereafter the buffalo must not be sold, having become sacred. This rule, however, is not always observed, especially if a good price is offered

Members of the non-Lingayat phratries carry parts of the disassembled structure to the cremation ground and use them in creating the pyre (though rarely today, as the material is now the common property of the village).

Someone donates a calf, which is brought to the Funeral Grassland to use as a "scapegoat," and in at least the Ke:ti Valley area, its sex corresponds with that of the deceased (Stokes 1882: 174; Natesa Sastri 1892: 836; Thurston 1906: 196; Noble and Noble 1965: 263). Elsewhere, the calf was a male (but not a he-buffalo), and it would be promised free to the Kotas present once it died. The calf, which has never been worked or castrated, is driven around the cot three times in a counterclockwise direction and is then driven away. It should never be reclaimed by its owner. The Kotas play the "bull-catching" tune. At this time, too, a cow is led onto the Funeral Grassland and is milked, or milk is brought in a pot, which is emptied onto the ground.<sup>36</sup>

The non-Lingayat phratries next stand for the litany of sins (Pl. 11a; Hockings 1988: 535, Fig. 31; Lingayats in general never say the litany of sins, because they assume that the deceased was incapable of sin). This litany is said by one or two older, knowledgeable men, with the crowd responding at the end of each line as the leader waves his right hand toward the feet—at other times, a gesture of blessing (Thurston and Rangachari 1909, I: 113). The prayer is actually a long list of all possible sins that the deceased might have committed rather than an outright condemnation, and the prayer asks for absolution. People should not stand in front of the feet of the corpse, to its north,<sup>37</sup> and thereby face the man saying the prayer. Since the litany is very long, it is not surprising that almost any recitation of it differs from any other one (Hockings 1988: 526–57). The following is my compilation<sup>38</sup> of all sins that may be mentioned, if they are remembered correctly.

This is the death of \_\_\_\_\_.

In his memory the calf Bassava is set free,  
Bassava the holy ox, born of the brindled  
cow Barrige.

From this world to the other one,

He goes in a chariot.

Let the man's body return to the earth;

Let the breath given by Siva go back to  
Siva.

for the animal" ("Miles" 1933: 75). An anonymous Victorian writer, S.W.H., stated that this "operation is repeated to six or eight buffaloes, which are then set loose, the same ceremony being repeated to the same number of cattle. The animals are supposed to be used by the dead man in Paradise, where he ploughs his fields, &c.; so that, once having been consecrated, they are left in idleness till they die a natural death" (Anonymous—S.W.H. 1879: 150–51). Properly, no other cattle should be milked in the village that day, "as this is the day the dead drinks milk" (Belli Gowder 1923–1941: 8).

<sup>34</sup> MacNamara (1912: 151). With Lingayats, it is generally the left hand. The Todas have a parallel ritual with sacrificed buffaloes. Not many Badagas own buffaloes or oxen today. If they have them, the chosen buffalo may become frightened by the crowd and the music. Because of this, the man generally puts a small amount of the milk into his own right hand and then transfers it to the mouth of the corpse. Similarly, he may touch the horns of the ox with one hand while with the other he holds the hand of the corpse. Dead Badaga women do not receive these rites because women never milk cattle. Harkness (1832: 132) saw 10–12 buffaloes milked into the mouth of the corpse.

Thurston (1906: 190) and other early writers describe the touching of the buffalo and its milking as having taken place on the yard soon after the corpse was removed from the house.

<sup>35</sup> If, however, the corpse is to be disposed of on the following day, then only the affines now dance around the catafalque, and later the corpse is removed to the adjacent veranda for the night. While there, the door of the Great House must remain open, and a light must be burning inside all night and all of the next night too. The minor cost of providing this light is met by the family in the Great House. The milk-giving ritual, unlike other funerary ritual, can actually be performed before all the affines arrive, as they are not involved in it.

<sup>36</sup> Although few still observe the prohibition, a dead man's cattle should not be milked or used in ploughing, except for this one cow, which provides milk for the ritual. That cow can be milked beforehand, and the milk may be kept ready in the cowshed. In earlier centuries a man's cattle were set free immediately after his death. Other villagers would hence be anticipating the death, since they had to protect their fields from the loose cattle. Once the corpse had been disposed of, however, the sons inheriting the man's property would bring the cattle in again and use them. The cattle should not be milked because "During the first two days of mourning the milk-house may not be entered, but on the third day it may be once more used" (Natesa Sastri 1892: 841). It is a sacred place, not to be entered by women or to be polluted by those who have just experienced a death.

<sup>37</sup> The orientation of the body here and in the Lingayat burial implies that north is the direction the soul will be going. Yet the original Badaga and Toda idea was that it was toward an afterworld in the west that the soul traveled, and quite specifically, one lying in the westernmost Nilgiris, an area called Malla:du. Several anecdotes support this. Thus, early in the 20th century,



He [the dead] has indeed sinned thirteen hundred times.

All the sins committed by his ancestors;  
All the sins committed by his forefathers;  
All the sins committed by his parents;  
All the sins committed by himself—  
May they fall at the feet of Bassava!

If \_\_\_\_\_ had carnal enjoyment in this world, it is a sin. [Response: A sin]

If \_\_\_\_\_ did evil toward his father or his grandfather, it is a sin. "

If he wronged all the past generations, it is a sin. "

If he was sinful towards his parents, it is a sin. "

If he did evil towards his father-in-law or mother-in-law, it is a sin. "

If he had carnal relations with his daughter-in-law, or his own children, it is a sin. "

If he brought about enmity between brothers, it is a sin. "

If he broke a bond of friendship, it is a sin. "

If he has killed a lizard, it is a sin. "

If he has killed a great lizard, it is a sin. "

If he has killed an ant-eating lizard, it is a sin. "

If he has killed a frog, it is a sin. "

If he moved a boundary-stone over, it is a sin. "

If he removed the field fences and let animals out, it is a sin. "

If he removed thorny branches around a field to let animals in, it is a sin. "

If he broke the growing plant, it is a sin. "

If he wasted dried firewood, it is a sin. "

If he cut the field pea stealthily, it is a sin. "

If he cut the raspberry outside his boundary, it is a sin. "

If he dragged away the sharp branches of holly, it is a sin. "

If he plucked young plants and threw them in the sunlight, it is a sin. "

If he swept with a broom, it is a sin. "

If he discarded seeds of grain, it is a sin. "

a group of Oṛanaṇṇi men watched a familiar man from Kaṭṭeṛi walk past them in a westerly direction. Although they shouted and shouted, he did not reply, and half an hour later some messengers came to say that he had just died in his bed. (I have recorded two other ghost stories from the same village that make the same point about ghosts along the path going west from Kaṭṭeṛi.)

<sup>15</sup> Based on Metz (1864: 80–81), Jagor (1876: 197–98), Thurston (1906: 193–95), Thurston and Rangachari (1909, I: 114–15), Samikannu (1922: 36–38), Belli Gowder (1923–1941: 1), Karl (1945: 22–24), and Noble and Noble (1965: 269–72); only Hockings (1988: 526–57, no. 1125a–d) gives the original texts. Restrictions in space prevent me from exploring the underlying Badaga ethics more fully here; cf. Hockings (1988).

——Proverb 676 (Hockings 1988: 348) counsels: "Don't create a rift between brothers; and don't move the definite field divisions."

——Proverb 676 (Hockings 1988: 348) makes the same point: "Don't create a rift between brothers; and don't move the definite field divisions."

——Proverb 1096b (Hockings 1988: 515) warns: "Don't destroy the field! Don't malign the village!"

If he used a cow to plough the land, it is a sin.	"	
If he milked a cow liberated as a calf at a funeral, it is a sin.	"	
If he coveted a cow or buffalo yielding milk abundantly, it is a sin.	"	——Proverb 1052a-b (Hockings 1988: 498) makes exactly the same points: "Don't stare [greedily at a] milch buffalo! Don't point the finger [enviously] at a flourishing field!"
If he coveted the good crops of others, it is a sin.	"	
If he was jealous of another village, it is a sin.	"	——Proverb 1096a (Hockings 1988: 515) states: "Don't make malicious gossip about the village! Don't criticize the region!" So too Proverb 1096b (Hockings 1988: 515) warns: "Don't destroy the field! Don't malign the village!"
If he spoke evil of another region ( <i>na:du</i> ), it is a sin.	"	
If he welcomed strangers instead of friends, it is a sin.	"	
If he refused food to the hungry, it is a sin.	"	——Proverb 483 (Hockings 1988: 276) counsels: "Give food to the person who came hungry; give [hot] drink to the one who came shivering."
If he refused fire to someone half frozen, it is a sin.	"	
If he troubled the poor and cripples, it is a sin.	"	——Proverb 1030 (Hockings 1988: 490–91) makes much the same point: "If a wealthy man is beating a poor man, the gods will beat that wealthy man."
If he misled strangers in the forest, it is a sin.	"	
If he created obstacles towards charitable deeds, it is a sin.	"	
If he spoke abusively to someone, it is a sin.	"	——Proverb 1017 (Hockings 1988: 485) says: "Don't speak disparagingly! Don't spit in a river!"
If he beat someone, it is a sin.	"	——Proverb 547 (Hockings 1988: 296) makes much the same point: "Don't slap an outsider's son! And don't eat a whole mouthful of onions!"
If he threw thorns on the road, it is a sin.	"	
If he tore his dress angrily when it caught on thorns, it is a sin.	"	
If he told lies, it is a sin.	"	
If he drove away brothers and sisters, it is a sin.	"	
If he showed ingratitude to a priest, it is a sin.	"	
If he showed disrespect toward a teacher, it is a sin.	"	——Also stated in Proverb 338a-b (Hockings 1988: 220): "You shouldn't appear to be disrespectful towards a teacher."
If he spat disrespectfully before someone, it is a sin.	"	——Proverb 1017 (Hockings 1988: 485) makes the same two points: "Don't speak disparagingly! Don't spit in a river!"
If he spat on Ganga [a stream or river], it is a sin.	"	
If he polluted Ganga with feces, it is a sin.	"	——But in contradiction to this is Proverb 553a (Hockings 1988: 298), which says: "For both flowing water and burning fire there is no pollution." Also Proverb 553b ( <i>idem.</i> ) says: "The muddiness of water will get cleared by the water." Nonetheless, such behavior as putting urine or feces in a river is viewed as an insult to the goddess Ganga.
If he crossed a river without paying respects to Ganga, it is a sin.	"	——Proverb 414a-b (Hockings 1988: 250–51) makes a similar point: "Both the man who is abusing [you behind your back and the] man who breaks down the dam [are alike]."
If he broke the dam of another, it is a sin.	"	
If he let someone's water supply run away, it is a sin.	"	
If he urinated on burning embers, it is a sin.	"	

If he bared his rice-cakes [buttocks] in  
the sunshine, it is a sin. "

If he threw dirty water towards the  
sunshine, it is a sin. "

If he watched the snake swallowing the  
moon [an eclipse] and then slept, it  
is a sin. "

If he gnashed his teeth at innocent babes  
[in anger or ridicule], it is a sin. "

If he committed adultery with a woman,  
it is a sin. "

If he raised his foot against his mother,  
it is a sin. "

If he laughed at a sister with evil in his  
heart, it is a sin. "

If he got on a cot while his father-in-law  
slept on the ground, it is a sin. "

If he sat on a raised veranda while his  
mother-in-law sat on the ground, it is  
a sin. "

[*Alternatively, for a dead woman*—If the  
daughter-in-law climbed up into the  
loft when her mother-in-law was in  
the house, it is a sin. "

If the daughter-in-law sat on the sleeping  
platform, it is a sin.] "

If he killed anything, whether snakes or  
cows, it is a sin. "

If he caught a bird and fed it to a cat,  
it is a sin. "

If he killed lizards and blood-suckers,  
it is a sin. "

If he poisoned someone's food, it is a sin. "

If he made false statements against  
someone, it is a sin. "

If he showed a wrong path, it is a sin. "

If he complained to the magistrate, it is  
a sin. "

If he went against natural instincts after  
reaching adulthood, it is a sin. "

If he committed even three hundred sins,  
may Lord Siva forgive his sins and take  
them from him! "

May all his good deeds open up the way,  
Holding the feet of Brahma,  
Holding the feet of Basava set free today,  
Holding the feet of six thousand godly  
saints,  
Holding the feet of twelve thousand pious  
people.

—Proverb 419 refers to smirking as undesirable behavior (Hockings 1988: 252), thus: "Don't trust the words of a person who is always smiling, nor sunshine in the rainy season."

—Proverb 274 (Hockings 1988: 196) advises: "Don't look [at her with a] sidelong glance; and don't smile [with bared] teeth at a beauty."

—Proverb 1079 (Hockings 1988: 509) makes the same points: "When your husband's father is present, don't get up onto the sleeping platform; when your husband's mother is present, don't go up on the ladder!"

—A proverb, no. 1151 (Hockings 1988: 596), warns: "The person who has killed won't escape [his own] murder."

—Proverb 311 (Hockings 1988: 211) counsels: "Lodge no complaint at a court; put no poison in any food"; while Proverb 1014a (Hockings 1988: 484) makes much the same point: "He who has spoken [malicious] gossip will not [survive] until evening; he who has given a potion will not [survive] till late morning."

—Similarly, Proverb 1014b-c (Hockings 1988: 484–85) advises: "He who has spoken [malicious] gossip will not [survive] until evening; he who is giving taunts will not [win] three friendships."

Let the saints and the pious ones join  
 together for him!  
 May he become one with them!  
 May he reach the pious group!  
 May the doors of heaven be open for him!  
 May the door of hell be closed to him!  
 May the hand of heaven be extended!  
 May the hand of hell be shortened!  
 May the ocean of death give way before  
 the departed soul!  
 May his soul reach eternal bliss!  
 May he be reunited with the other life-  
 partner!  
 May the door of heaven open suddenly!  
 May splendor appear everywhere!  
 May the burning pillars be cooled!  
 May the thread bridge become firm enough  
 for his passage!  
 If his path is obstructed by thorn bushes,  
 may he easily find a way through them!  
 May his path to the other world be clear of  
 all obstructions!  
 May the house of wickedness be closed!  
 May the house of righteousness prevail!  
 May the mouth of the dragon be closed!  
 May the pit of worms be closed to him!  
 May the wicked hands of the deceased be  
 prevented from sinning yet again!  
 May his hands be extended in charity  
 towards others yet again!  
 May he pass on to the place of the golden  
 pillars!  
 May he lean on the silver pillars after his  
 journey!  
 May all his sins be forgiven!  
 May he seize the feet of a thousand priests!  
 May he seize the feet of three hundred  
 priests!  
 May he seize Basava's feet!  
 May he approach the feet of Brahma, the  
 Deity who originally endowed  
 everything!  
 May he approach the face of Siva!  
 Thus may the soul of the departed join  
 Siva's generation!  
 So be it!                      [Response: So be it!]

Once the sins have been listed and the calf<sup>39</sup>  
 released, the corpse is thought to be pure. At this

<sup>39</sup> Mörike (1857: 60) says they were listed three times.  
 The calf is not always available. "At the funerals of

point most relatives walk three times around the corpse “with earth on their heads and hatchets in their hands” (Metz 1864: 79) and put a little earth on the face as they say: “Mud for the mouth of the man that died; [but] gruel for the mouth of the living” (Hockings 1988: 193, no. 263). This symbolizes three daily meals.

After this, all Badaga phratries except the Wodeyas perform the “grain-carrying rite,”<sup>40</sup> the ceremonial placing of grain on the corpse. The Funeral Grassland is generally on the edge of the village, on the way to the cremation or burial ground.<sup>41</sup> The corpse is left there with a few men as well as with some classificatory daughters and sisters, while everyone who is to be in the procession returns to the front yard of the Great House. For a dead woman, Jagor noted, now “there follows the recounting of the female virtues by one woman, then by several others. People place a little tobacco, betel leaves and sugar for the corpse, formed into rolls on a plate, the middle of them held together by a finger-ring” (Jagor 1914: 43–44, trans.). When the women are weeping over a dead child, they often address the soul of a relative already dead who had seen the child when both were still alive. They ask him or her to introduce the child to its ancestors in heaven, lest the ancestors not recognize who it is.

At the Great House, the village priest, or some postmenopausal lady who belongs to the village, hands out pounded grain that he or she has carefully mixed with bits of Bermuda grass<sup>42</sup> and a little clarified butter. The grain has been husked beforehand in the Great House or in the house of the founder of the bereaved family’s lineage, and it should be a particular millet.<sup>43</sup> A mortar there is first swept out with *hubbe* twigs (six distinct species; Hockings and Pilot-Raichoor 1992: 596), and then fresh cow dung is smeared on the inside of the mortar. Raw millet is placed in the mortar three times, and each time it is pounded and then winnowed (nowadays not at all conscientiously). The woman who winnows mixes in the clarified butter and pieces of grass and then distributes a little to each of the people in turn. All the males of generations junior<sup>44</sup> to that of the deceased and related to the dead person as agnates stand in single file. They are first ranked according to their generation level and then within each level according to absolute age, with the oldest coming first (Figs. 8b, 9a and b). In 1963, for example, there were altogether five such generation levels in O:raṇa:yī, whereas the neighboring village of Kaṭe:ri, which is larger, had six. Gauda men of

which we were spectators, no calf was brought near the corpse, and the celebrants of the rites were satisfied with the mere mention by name of a calf . . .” (Thurston 1906: 195–96; see also Francis 1908: 134; Thurston and Rangachari 1909, I: 117).

<sup>40</sup> *Akkivettudu sa:sṭira* or *akkiye: sa:sṭara*.

<sup>41</sup> Not every hamlet has a cremation or burial ground. It was common, particularly in the past, for several small contiguous hamlets to share one ground.

<sup>42</sup> Called *garike*, or *Cynodon dactylon*. Thurston (1906: 196) said that a little cow dung is added, but he may have been mistaken: it could have been the butter.

<sup>43</sup> This is *koraḷi*, or foxtail millet (*Setaria italica*). Nowadays it is not normally grown, and rice is commonly used. I knew one old lady who kept some foxtail millet that was then a quarter of a century old, retained just for this ritual. Badagas or Todas will still occasionally walk to the Meḷ Siṃme area (the neighboring Bili-giri-Rangan Hills) to purchase some of this millet from the small Badaga community there.

<sup>44</sup> Hence this giving of grain cannot be done for dead children. A dead child is kept for a few minutes in the front yard, where it is held by some old man of the lineage, though not one of his or her household. After this, the corpse is carried straight to the Funeral Grassland, held there for a few minutes too, and is then carried on to the burial or cremation ground. The corpse cannot be carried by a woman or child. Another old man, generally the oldest in the village, leads this procession and carries a crowbar (see below). Every cremation or burial ground has a separate place for the burial of children.

the same generation as a dead woman do not place the grain mixture on her corpse. Lingayat men of that generation do, however. Lingayats say that an elder brother's wife is "equal to a mother," and hence they perform the rite as they would for a classificatory mother; but Gaudas claim that a brother's wife can become one's own wife, and so they do not place the mixture under these circumstances. No one does it who is of a senior generation to the deceased.

One by one the people in the file come up to the old lady, who gives each a small quantity of the grain mixture from a winnow she is holding. They hold this above their heads between their two hands,<sup>45</sup> with the grass and a knife projecting from between the fingers. The leading man of each generation level, who must also carry a small knife,<sup>46</sup> has an umbrella held over him by a man of the village; he cannot be an affine. This man stands at his left side, as a mark of worthiness, so that the various generations in the line are clearly to be seen.

The line of people is led by a Kota band, if present, and then by the oldest male of the senior-most generation,<sup>47</sup> who walks with bared chest and carries a billhook (Fig. 9a; remember, he may not be of a generation senior to the deceased). The women, who follow all the men and boys, are also organized according to age. This is the only part of the funeral for which they remove their headcloths. Behind them and last in the order is the surviving spouse, if there is one (but he/she may be followed by a second Kota band). A few close male relatives who accompany this person may hold a canopy attached to four umbrellas over the head of the surviving spouse during this procession, while they chant "*o: hau hau.*" The counterclockwise circuit of the other relatives, by contrast, is conducted in complete silence. The widow or widower, as the case may be, also carries the grain mixture, but in her/his case, the tool is a sickle, held with the point upward (Figs. 9a and b). This, as well as the other knives used in the ritual, are all kept ready in the house where the grain was distributed. Aside from the widow, women in this line carry no implements at all.

The Kota musicians, if present, lead and also follow as a group, but everyone else comes in single file. They all go around the corpse three times in a counterclockwise direction, while the widow or widower goes around three times in a clockwise direction and stops at the foot of the cot (whether or not the surviving spouse was the younger one). Until she/he is in that place, the

<sup>45</sup> The youngest children in the line may have to be carried by others, but still the grain is in their hands, or, if it is more convenient, it is just held against a hand. During the time that they hold the grain, people should not chant "*o: hau hau,*" because this implies completion.

Natesa Sastri states that balls of this mixture are made in a set number, either 31, 41, 51, or 61 of them; each person would get several. In his day, the direction of the procession for placing the mixture was seemingly reversed for the females who were participating: "all the males go round by the right and the females by the left" (Natesa Sastri 1892: 835; see also Thurston 1906: 196). Also of interest in his quite detailed account is that the empty pot from which the cooked rice and butter and several other kinds of grain were distributed is taken up on the end of a reaping hook by an "old woman," presumably the widow. After all have thrown the balls of food onto the corpse, the woman "breaks the mud vessel at its feet." He adds that this means that "enough has been done for the departed and that the dead man's connection with those alive has entirely ceased by the breaking of the pot" (Natesa Sastri 1892: 835). Todas have a similar pot-breaking rite at the conclusion of their funerals, and the practice is widespread in India (Rivers 1906: 383, 698).

<sup>46</sup> Indeed, anyone who wants to may carry such a knife.

<sup>47</sup> The women who take part follow the males and are not so important; in some funerals, no women travel in this procession at all. Only daughters, sons' daughters, and daughters' daughters, whether actual or classificatory, participate. These women are divided up in order of generation level. However, the leading woman—the oldest—of each generation level is not "marked" by an umbrella, as the men are.

All men who participate ought to be bare-chested as well as bareheaded, but now most of them wear shirts.

In very exceptional cases, a man may have two wives and may be about to perform the seventh-month-of-pregnancy ceremony for one of them when the other one dies. In such a situation, he will need to keep his beard in order to do the seventh-month ritual, and, therefore, he will not perform the funeral obsequies for his other wife but rather will allow his brother to do so.

leader of the file cannot deposit some of the grain mixture on the corpse. Then, one after the other, everyone places a little of it on the head of the body. When they have all finished, the widow or widower places some of the mixture at the feet of the corpse (Fig. 11b and Drawing 2A).<sup>48</sup>

Next, the right and then the left earring of the widow or widower are removed and, with a widow, the finger and nose ring are removed as well. If she has a necklace, it is taken off and the *ta:li* (marriage emblem) is broken. All this is done by an agnatic relative for a widower or by a classificatory husband's brother for a widow. The objects are given to a man from the dead person's family. Special funereal earrings and a nose ring may then be put on or twigs of false bog-myrtle or rolled-up bits of palm leaf may be placed in her ears. Once this ritual is over, the couple is no longer considered married.<sup>49</sup> The bits of twig or palm leaf are removed and tied into a corner of the corpse's cloth as a memento (Belli Gowder 1923–1941: 9).

Next, a sister of the deceased, whether male or female, should cut some hair from her head and tie it to the right big toe or even to both big toes of the corpse (Thurston and Rangachari 1909, I: 118).<sup>50</sup> She must then go around the cot once in a counterclockwise direction, starting at the leg to the right (east) of the head, bow down, and touch the ground with both hands, each time with somebody helping her up. Similarly, other close female relatives, such as a classificatory daughter, son's daughter, or sister, may go around doing this too (though this rite is no longer always done). Then, after they have fallen down like this, "throwing themselves howling to the ground, the women press around the body again, talk to it and sob" (Jagor 1876: 198, trans.). Some of them will say things like, "Tell my husband I'm too old to live in this world now: ask him to beg God to let me come there!" Or, "Tell my father I now have many children!" And perhaps, too, "Women attached to a [dead] man by an illegitimate tie sometimes also cut off a lock of hair, and, tying it to a twig of [false bog-myrtle], place it inside the cloth" (Thurston and Rangachari 1909, I: 113).<sup>51</sup>

At last the corpse is carried off by four men to the burial or burning ground while it is still on its cot (Fig. 15b). The order of the procession is, first, the Kota musicians; then the man who led the grain-placing rite (now carrying a pot of fire from the Great House, with which to drive away ghosts that lurk near the funeral ground) (Fig. 16a); then

In Keti and one or two other villages, where there is a (vestigial) hunting ceremony (*be:da habba*), one funerary knife is very elaborate (see Fig. 12a and Drawing 3). This is owned by the entire village but is only used very rarely at the funerals of particularly important men. Thurston (1906: 191–92) described such a tool as "a double iron sickle with imitation buffalo horns on the tip which is placed with a hatchet, buguri (flute), and walking-stick, on the cot or on the ground beside it" by the Kota associate who brings these.

<sup>48</sup> This grain is not considered food for the dead but rather is a reminder that this is the fruit of their labor, now being offered out of respect for the dead. There is an implication that the more junior people will feed the senior people.

If a widow dies, since her husband is already dead, his brother performs this ritual on her body—indeed, he does all the appropriate rituals—or else this item is omitted. When a widower dies, however, no one places grain on his feet.

In the early 20th century and before, if a man was an outcast or if he converted to Christianity (which amounted to the same thing), his Hindu brother would perform all the funeral rituals when his Hindu wife died.

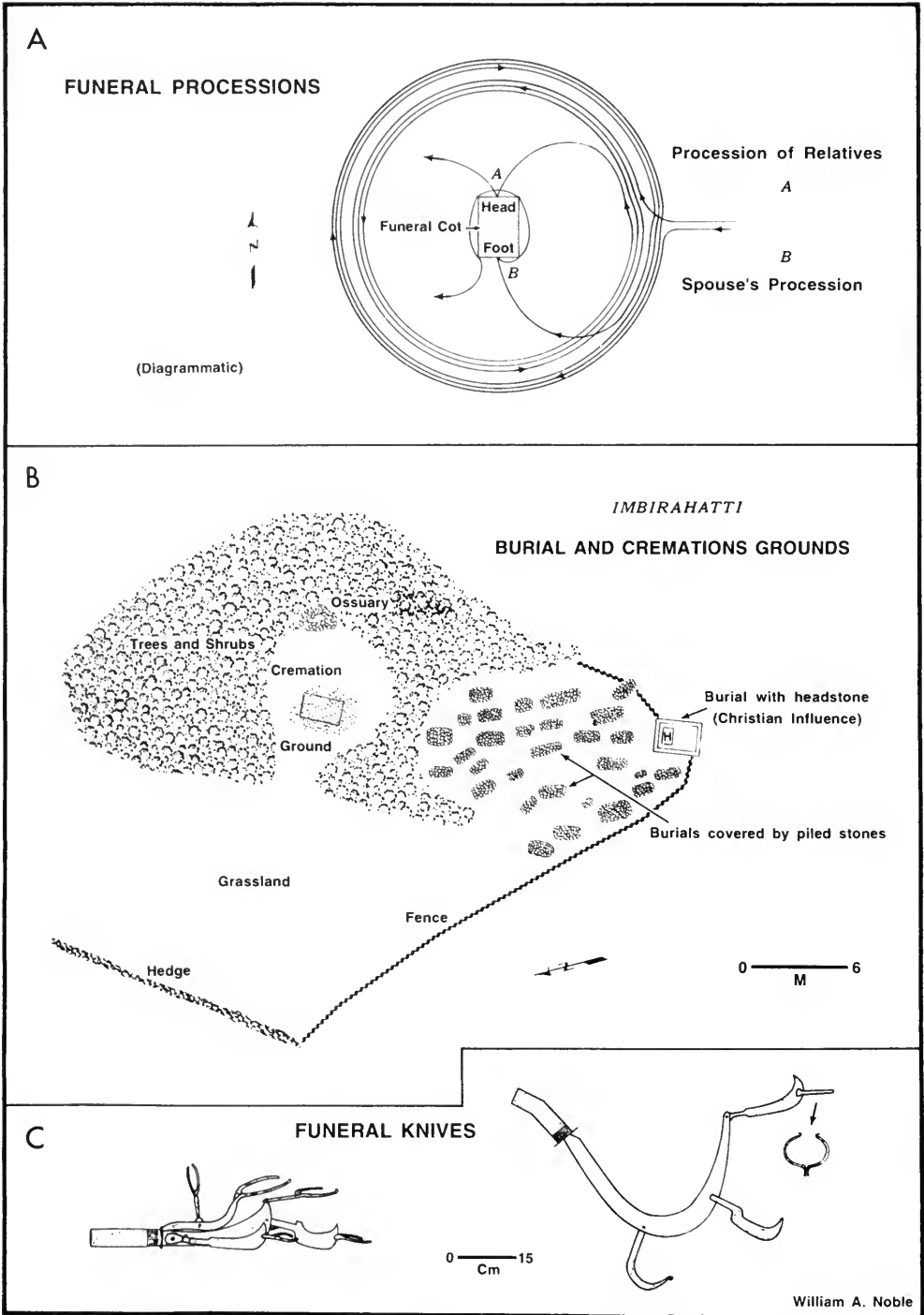
<sup>49</sup> The plant is *moranda*, or *Dodonaea angustifolia*. I have heard of a funeral being delayed for some time while everyone hunted for the plant.

A Wodeya widow also used to break an iron bangle on the cot beside the corpse, but now she breaks one that simulates iron but is made of black glass. Only when a woman does this *ode* (breaking) ritual at a dry funeral for her long-missing husband is she then free to remarry following the *korumbu* ritual, and she remains with her second husband even if the first one eventually reappears.

A widow is not obliged to perform the ritual at her husband's funeral if he had not yet paid the bridewealth. His relatives, however, would pay the sum at once to ensure that she does it. This money is put on the funerary cot next to the knees of the deceased by the headman or the go-between (*belega:ra*), so that when the guarantor (*honega:ra*) arrives, he can take it straightaway to the woman's father.

In the extraordinary funeral described by Mrs. Schad (1911), the ceremony occurred on the very day that the dead youth was supposed to be married. His young bride was therefore given a *ta:li*, or marriage emblem, from his own dead hand. She was then stripped of it and her jewelry, immediately became a widow, and was led away (Schad 1911: 6). The gift of the *ta:li* to such a girl can also be made by a brother or a classificatory brother of the deceased. He says, "Shall I give the *ta:li*?" three times, then touches it to the hand of the corpse and puts it around the girl's neck. (Often the hand cannot be moved because of rigor mortis.) Similarly, if a pregnant woman dies without having received the *ta:li*, her husband will tie it to her body at this point.

<sup>50</sup> Wolf has written at length about the symbolism of tying the toes together (1997: 212–217), though without coming to a particular conclusion. My feeling is that there is a functional explanation. If the two feet were not tied together somehow, it would be quite likely during the transporting of the cot over rough ground that



DRAWING 2. A. Funeral processions. B. Burial and cremation grounds. C. Funeral knives.



one of the women who have just been falling down (either a sister of a dead man or a husband's sister of a dead woman); then the cot with the corpse; then the catafalque (if indeed there is one); then the male mourners; and finally a few women, some of whom carry baskets of food offerings and kitchen implements.<sup>52</sup> The woman who precedes the corpse shakes the loose upper part of her body cloth from side to side all the way, while still wearing it, to drive any evil spirits away (Thurston 1906: 196). In many funerals today, a few rupees' worth of small coins (*sukka ka:su*) are thrown away. Some are thrown in the air before or behind the corpse as it proceeds to the burning ground, and the remainder are mixed in with puffed amaranth or puffed rice and are thrown onto the pyre. On reaching the edge of the burial or burning ground, the party continues on with the corpse, but the Kotas stop there, sit down, and go on playing. As people enter this ground, they remove their footwear, out of respect for the dead.

one leg might roll askance, revealing the genitals of the deceased to view. Not only would this be an embarrassment to the beholders, but it would reveal bodily orifices that foul-intentioned hovering spirits might then invade. For this same reason the jaw is tied, thus keeping the mouth shut. That there was once more than casual interest in the orifices of the dead is evidenced in Dubois's account of the Hindu funeral in premodern Mysore (1906: 486), where he describes, with some disgust, "a most extraordinary ceremony, . . . the chief mourner placing his lips successively to all the apertures of the deceased's body, addressing to each a *mantram* appropriate to it, kissing it, and dropping on it a little ghee. By this ceremony the body is supposed to be completely purified."

<sup>51</sup> If the dead man happens to have left a widow who is pregnant for the first time and who has never gone through the seventh-month ceremony, then she must receive the marriage thread (*kanni*) at this time, to make her child legitimate: "The pregnant woman is . . . brought close to the cot, and a near relation of the deceased, taking up a cotton thread twisted in the form of a necklace without knots, throws it round her neck. Sometimes the hand of the corpse is lifted up with the thread, made to place it round the neck" (Thurston 1906: 196; see also Thurston and Rangachari 1909, I: 117).

<sup>52</sup> The embers are carried in a new pot, formerly made by Kotas. It is grasped by the rim with a bunch of hill mango leaves (*tuz:de*, or *Meliosma simplicifolia*), so that the fingers do not touch the pot. In a Wodeya funeral, no woman precedes the corpse.



FIG. 1. a. Lingayat corpses are displayed and buried in a cross-legged position; O:rana:yi. (Note the coin and handbell.)



FIG. 1. b. Lingayat corpses are displayed in cross-legged position.



FIG. 2. a. Bereaved Lingayat son carries grave-digging hoe; O:rana:yi.  
b. Kotas playing at an O:rana:yi funeral.



FIG. 3. **a.** Special dancing skirt at an O:ra:na:yi funeral.



FIG. 3. **b.** Divisional headman (*pa:rpatti*) dancing to Kota music at an O:ra:na:yi funeral.



FIG. 4. a (top) and b (bottom): Dancing to Kota music at an O:rana:yi funeral, 1963.

FIG. 5. a. Special dancing dress at an O:rana:yi funeral.

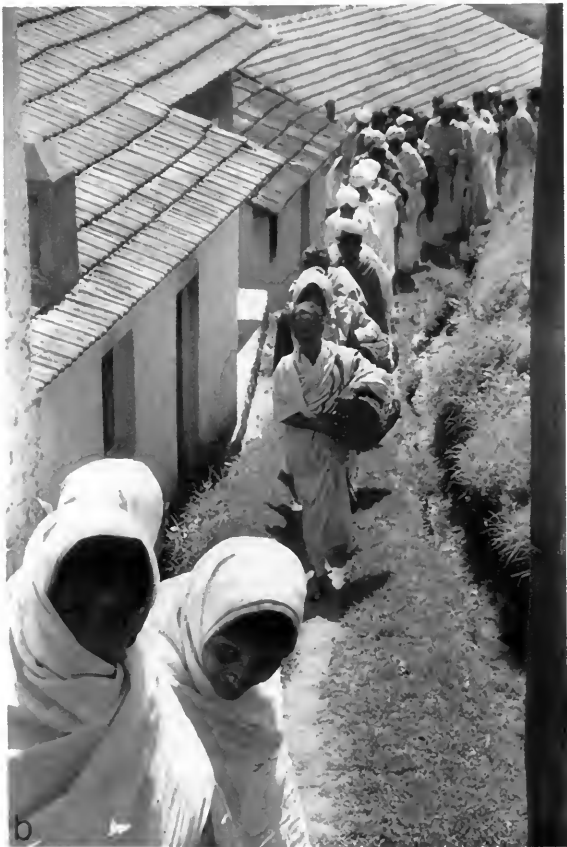


FIG. 5. b. Kota band in procession, O:rana:yi.



FIG. 6. a. Kota helps construct a *gu:da:ra* at an O:ra:nyi funeral.  
 b. Gaúda funeral (with *gu:da:ra*) at Mainele, 1963. (Photograph: William A. Noble.)



FIG. 7. a. Catafalque at a funeral in Hubbatale, ca. 1925. (Figure continues on opposite page.)





FIG. 7. **b.** Widower approaches wife's corpse at a Hulla:da funeral, 1963.



a



b

FIG. 8. a. Funeral of a Ha:ruva in Osatti, 1963. (Photograph: William A. Noble.)  
b. Funeral procession of agnates in Hulla:qa, 1963.



FIG. 9. a. Lingayat funeral procession, O:rana:yi.



FIG. 9. b. Lingayat funeral procession, O:rana:yi.



FIG. 10 a. Funeral procession in O:rana:yi.  
b. Funeral procession of agnates in Hulla:ða, 1963.



FIG. 11. **a.** The litany of possible sins being recited.  
**b.** Bereaved man pays respects to dead spouse. Hulla:ḍa (see Drawing 2a).



FIG. 12. a. Widower carrying a complex knife in Hulla:ḍa (See Drawing 2C).



FIG. 12. b. Young boy pays respects to a dead agnate, Hulla:ḍa.



FIG. 13. a. Offerings brought for a dead woman's funeral.



FIG. 13. b. Bridge of thread being strung across a Lingayat grave, O:rana:yi. (Note two small lamps in niches in the wall of the grave; see Drawing 3.).



FIG. 14. a. Food offerings on corpse in a grave.  
b. *Pūja* at the feet of a *guru* standing on a Lingayat grave.





FIG. 15. **a.** *Pūja* at the feet of a *guru* standing on a Lingayat grave; Kaṭe:ri.



FIG. 15. **b.** Corpse being taken to the burial ground; O:raṇa:yi.



FIG. 16. **a.** Toreya man with fire pot leading a Gauḍa funeral in Accanakal, 1963. (Photographs: William A. Noble.)

**b.** Cremation in Accanakal, 1963.

## The Ultimate Separation

### Burial of the Dead

All Lingayats bury their dead, as do all Badaga Christians. Other phratries normally bury children who die before puberty, and very poor families may also bury their dead because they cannot afford the firewood. An old person sometimes has asked to be buried. Bad weather may also make a cremation impracticable: it is a very bad omen if it rains during a funeral, for this might indicate that heaven is weeping over the heavy sins of the deceased (according to Metz 1864: 79). In all cases, except for those involving Christians, the corpse is placed directly in the ground and not in a coffin.<sup>1</sup> This, like the cremation, should occur between noon and sunset (Rhiem 1900: 505).

In a Lingayat funeral, the corpse is carried counterclockwise once around the grave, and then the cot is put down at the north side, in a north-south alignment. There, all the jewelry and ornaments are taken off the corpse and given to a responsible man of the bereaved family, an act that is witnessed by some leading villager, such as the headman. An exception is that a dead female must wear a silver finger ring or at least must have one thrown into the grave. The *linga* emblem hanging around the neck is then taken off, and, if the corpse is male, it is tied up in a piece of woolen cloth on the upper left arm; if it is female,<sup>2</sup> the *linga* is similarly tied to the upper right arm. After this, whatever colored cloths and cloaks are on the body will be wrapped around it in a special way known only to a few villagers (in order to make a bundle). The grain still lying on the cot is put inside this bundle.

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> An earthen heap or rocks are sometimes piled up over the grave, but others remain unmarked. Recently a very few have acquired formal headstones, in imitation of Christian practice.

In cases in which a Lingayat woman had married a Haruva man, or vice versa, the woman's corpse is disposed of according to the custom of her husband's clan.

Among Gaudas who habitually cremate, when they decide to bury a corpse instead, the cot is put down on the edge of the burial ground. A small fire is lit with dry twigs in a circular clearing of the turf. Apparently this is a vestigial pyre, as the fire serves no further purpose. Before the corpse is put in a coffin (a Christian influence) on the burial ground or, more often, is just buried in a bundle of cloth, it is swung three times over the grave (see below). Once it is interred and baskets of grain are heaped on top of it, the grave is filled, and then the small fire is put out with a potful of water. A second man brings another potful and throws it onto the cold embers of some recent cremation. Then men go through the act of looking for a piece of burned bone there; they put it on a small bed of fern fronds and place this on a fragment of white cloth that was previously torn from a loincloth of the deceased. This is placed on the ground, and everyone there bows to it. The same two men who

In the south wall of the pit, a niche is cut to support the head. The corpse will not be laid out but rather is seated with the feet to the north and the head toward the south, propped up with mud and with its legs crossed, so that the face seems to be staring toward the north. This is because the abode of Siva, the great “natural *lingas*,” and the sacred places (*kṣē:tra*) all lie to the north, in the Himalayas; north is also the direction of rest.

Before the corpse may be buried, the grave has to be made into a temple (which probably explains why non-Badagas and Christians are not allowed to dig the grave). This involves a purification process, with a man first sprinkling a solution of cow dung into the grave. Then two small shelves are dug out of the wall at the head end of the pit and a piece of cow dung is placed on each shelf. A hollow is made in the middle of each, and into this is placed some clarified butter and a new cotton thread. Each wick is then lit with the fire that was brought from the village (Fig. 13b). A place without light, they say, is like Hell. Using this fire, some incense is also lit and is circled once around the pit. The officiant<sup>3</sup> then lights a lump of camphor and places that in the bottom of the grave at the head end. Next, two coconuts are broken with a large knife. A single half is left on the floor of the pit, while the other three halves are thrown out on top (and should not be eaten by anyone).

The corpse bundle is now held and swung three times over the grave by three, five, or seven men (Belli Gowder 1923–1941: 10). It is said that in early times, people were not always certain that the person was dead, and occasionally the corpse woke up, so this movement was a precautionary shaking (see above, p. 16). Once its visage has been covered up, it is lowered into the grave by several men who are standing above the grave, and it is received by two men who are in the pit. In the case of a rich man, he may actually be buried on his cot. In all other cases, the corpse has sacking and one or two pillows beneath it. Its face is now bared once more.

Then, four sticks, each some ten inches long, which have been cut from the holly-flowered spindle tree<sup>4</sup> are placed at the edges of the grave, as in Drawing 3.

A single long thread of new cotton is then tied around these upright sticks in the manner illustrated, beginning with the one to the west of the head (Fig. 13b and Drawing 3; the head is always at the south end of the grave). Then four men stand so that each can take up one of these sticks,

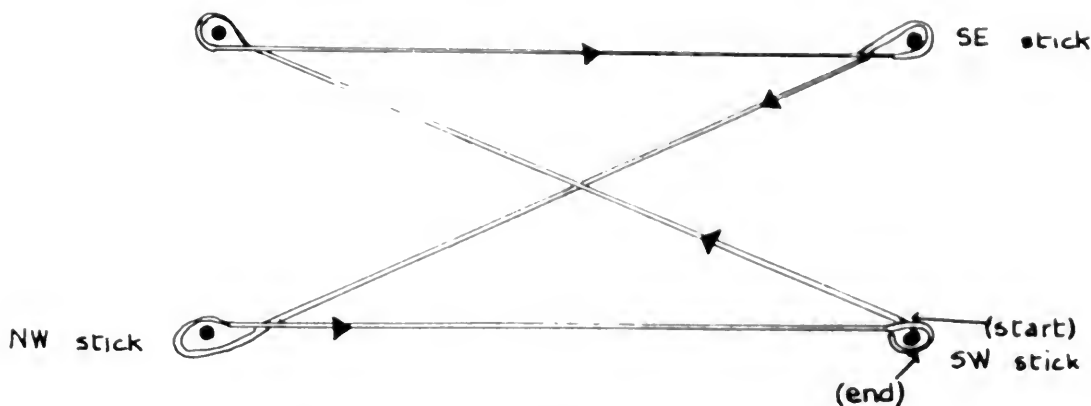
got potfuls of water now do so again. Then the chief mourner pours one pot onto the wet charcoal. He takes a piece of plantain leaf with sprigs of Bermuda grass on it and throws this into the puddle at the burning place so that the grass is under the leaf. The piece of burned bone and fern fronds are then wrapped up in the cloth and buried nearby with a fork. A small stone is placed on top of the spot. Finally, the men wash their hands in the second pot of water and take some millet from a bag. They stand in a circle with a break in it while an old man says a prayer, and then all throw their handfuls of grain into the wet charcoal (see the description of cremation, pp. 54–56).

<sup>2</sup> If the deceased was a young woman, this could be the first time that the *linga* has been given to her. The tying of the *linga* should really be done when the body is being bathed in the house, but if it is forgotten, then it will certainly be done at the graveside. The bathing itself may be inconvenient to do and is not a necessity.

Woḍeyas bury not only the person's *linga*—even if the person never previously owned one—but some sacred ash (*vibu:ti*) too.

<sup>3</sup> The officiant must be a Lingayat but can be any man there who knows the ritual well, provided he is not an affine of the deceased.

<sup>4</sup> Called *ottarane*, or *Microtropis ovalifolia*. Woḍeyas, though Lingayats, do not practice this thread ritual.



DRAWING 3. "Bridge of thread" over a Lingayat grave.

and with great care they hold them together over the middle of the grave, then gather together sticks and thread and put it all on the floor of the grave beside the head. This is considered a very important ritual that must be performed carefully by older, knowledgeable men. To get into paradise, the Lingayat soul must walk along this thread over a great fiery chasm full of monsters.<sup>5</sup> If there is one knot in the thread or if it is broken somewhere, the deceased is said to be a sinner and, as such, will fall off the thread. Consequently, there are detailed rules for how to pass the thread carefully around the four sticks.

Then another *pūja* is done, which makes the Lingayat corpse itself into a *linga*. This ritual is not to be witnessed, and so four men hold a cloth across the top of the grave. It must be a new cloth, bought by the bereaved family. The cloth also prevents polluting matter like bird droppings from falling in. Underneath, the face of the corpse is washed and sacred ash (*vibu:ti*) put on its brow. Then they take the *linga* emblem off the arm, where it was tied earlier, place it in the mouth, and close the mouth. *Pūja* is then offered with plantains and two more coconuts on a plate that is circled vertically in a clockwise direction (from the officiant's viewpoint). One plantain and half of a coconut are left in the grave, and the rest may be given to some nearby Harijans, but it is certainly not to be eaten by any Badagas.

Some of the women who come to the funeral bring sweets and grain, which are now placed beside the corpse in special baskets<sup>6</sup> made by Todas (Figs. 13a and 14a). Women may also bring wooden ladles, pounding sticks (probably not genuine), etc., all of which are placed in the grave alongside the body. (Previously, the affines have

<sup>5</sup> The indigenous Badaga belief for all phratries is that the soul's journey begins after its final meal at the *ko-rumbu* ritual. According to some, the soul crosses five seas by itself in a boat. Landing in the other world, it goes through thick jungles and then crosses a chasm on a bridge of threads. This chasm contains seven terrors, including a wide river, a great fire, poisonous snakes, demons, and wild beasts, which are referred to in the litany of sins (see above, p. 26). The soul comes to a door that is ever closed, and the living relatives pray that it will yield to let the soul enter. If fortunate, the dead thus reaches the place of judgment, where a trial is conducted. With a heavy load of sins, a soul may still be relegated to Hell.

Jagor provides further details of Badaga belief:

"The Nilgris were surrounded by a sea, the ring of which however has not entirely closed to the north. There one would find the canal unattainable by mortals, which joins the world of the dead with Mahaloka; across it there is a bridge made of one thread. Fire and frightful monsters terrify the wicked; but whosoever's sins are buried at the feet of Bassava will go across without hindrance. On the slope on our side in a narrow path running down to the bridge, where the Sunkadavanu 'customs official' stands. . . . The customs official is a dead person" (Jagor 1914: 50, trans.).

<sup>6</sup> The basket is slightly different in design for a male's funeral than for a female's, since in the former case a big central basket, which has four tiny ones attached to it, has a kind of raised rib panel about a half of an inch wide running around its middle. Another basket (*he:gi kukke*) is only used in the funeral of a female. It holds

danced around the front yard carrying all these offerings.) Until the two men in the grave have climbed out of it, after completing everything there, no one may throw anything into the grave, as this would imply that they were being buried too.

Once they are out, an old man, generally the one who carried the crowbar, throws at least one flower, and preferably more, onto the corpse. As he throws the first flower, a Kota must sound a long note on his horn, and after that, there will be no more music. Then the same man must pick up some mud three times and throw it into the grave (or else take up one large clod and throw it in three separate parts).<sup>7</sup> Someone should also throw in a small coin, considered to be money for a toll. Once this is done, everyone else can throw some mud in, either once or thrice, with or without flowers. As they do so, the leader says this prayer, and the others follow verbally:

Join, alas, with your caste group!

Join, alas, your people!

Join, alas, the begotten forefathers!

Join, alas, the ancient ancestors!

(Hockings 1988: 145, no. 148a; Natesa Sastri 1892: 839)

The soul of the dead is thus being requested to go to the ancestors. Even if the grave has been half filled in, the men may stop work if someone is seen running to contribute his handful of earth. Once all this has been done, anyone, even an affine, can help fill the grave. It is then leveled off, with four big stones placed in a square pattern<sup>8</sup> over the location where the chest lies, and a little pointed stone is brought by some elderly person and placed in the middle of these; all are called *lingas*. These stones can be taken from anywhere, even from an older grave.

Then another nameless ritual is performed. Two or three of the tools used are picked up by one of the gravediggers, and the metal heads of these are put on the reverse way around, such that the tools are rendered useless. Then this man holds them with the crowbar and stands on the south side of the grave, facing west. He swings the tools back and forth three times while saying, "Once, twice, thrice," and then he throws them across the grave toward the north, using an underhand motion to do this (Natesa Sastri 1892: 838). As he does so, he simultaneously turns his head away from the grave and toward the south. Old men say that this

sweet preparations brought to the funeral. The female dead should also be presented with a needle and a piece of fiber (*manji*) from the Nilgiri nettle or harmless nettle (of various species; Hockings and Pilot-Raichoor 1992: 444–45); the needle is stuck into the offering basket.

In 1963, although younger people were then skeptical, almost all the old people (born before the turn of the century) believed that the baskets, food, and thread put into the Lingayat's grave were actually used by the soul of the dead individual. They recognized that these articles would rot in the earth, yet they thought that another body would emanate from these items with exactly the same form as the original and that this body would go to the afterworld. Such entities, like the soul itself, are invisible to mortals.

<sup>7</sup> There are specific rules about filling in a grave. All the earth that has been dug out must be replaced, although it will form a heap, because it might contain pieces of bone from some former burial. As it is being dragged into the grave with hoes and shovels, the outermost earth must be dragged first so that no "islands" of loose earth remain on the ground. A further ritual requirement is that a man filling a grave may not pass any tool between his legs but can pass it only on his outer side (Natesa Sastri 1892: 839).

<sup>8</sup> This, however, is only done for adults: for a dead child, only three stones are put on the grave.

ritual act, and the disabling of the tools for it, imply a wish that there should be no more death.

Persons related as classificatory brother or father to the dead person bring fresh flowers to the burial ground while the others wait. These are collected, together with fresh fire and milk,<sup>9</sup> from the Great House, the house of the village's founder, or else from a "second Great House." The men should also bring at least one knife. The man who had led the grain-giving ritual carries some little millet<sup>10</sup> in one of his body cloths and waits quietly with it until everyone is ready.

Then the man<sup>11</sup> who performed the *pūja* in the grave now does a *pūja* for a third time while he is on top of it. First he washes the five stones, puts flowers on them, and touches them with sacred ash. Then the milk from the Great House is poured first on the central *liṅga* and next on the other four stones. The man breaks two coconuts and splits some plantains over the grave. Immediately after the milk-pouring, at an adult's or male child's funeral only, people stand in a circle around the grave, with a break on the north side of the circle, through which the soul may depart. The leader of the grain-giving ceremony now goes around the circle, and each man takes a small amount of millet from him.<sup>12</sup> Afterwards the man asks, "Is anyone left?" and throws a handful of grain onto the central *liṅga* stone; all the others follow suit. Each man touches that stone in turn: if of an older generation than the deceased, he touches it and then touches his fingers to his brow; if of a younger generation, he touches the stone itself with his brow. This procedure is not performed in order of seniority: the person standing to the west of the gap in the circle does it first, then the man to his right, and so on around the circle until all have participated. This is the milk-pouring ritual, which traditionally should occur on the following day.<sup>13</sup> Five measures of fox-tail millet (about 18.5 liters) and a pot of milk are taken to the grave. As these are thrown over the central *liṅga* stone, the men say, "Join, alas, with your forefathers!" (Natesa Sastri 1892: 840; Hockings 1988: 146–47).

Then the men sit down in a group and are shaved<sup>14</sup> by one or two barbers. If time is pressing, at least one prominent man will be shaved and the rest will shave later, whenever it is convenient, but definitely by the final *korumbu* ritual. The rules for shaving are that all Badaga men shave for dead men, women, and male children; but in every case, men of a generation superior to the deceased should only remove their beards and

<sup>9</sup> In former times, the milk had to be brought in a small new pot; now, any vessel will do. Previously, that pot (*go:dike*) was to be thrown away afterwards, since it could not be brought back to the house for further use because it was polluted.

<sup>10</sup> Called *sa:me*, or *Panicum sumatrense*.

<sup>11</sup> Since the middle of the past century, that faction of Badaga Lingayats who approve of intermarriage with people from Mysore—perhaps one-third of the entire Lingayat community—have a *jangama* priest, *guru*, or *guru's* representative come to do this on the day of the burial. They believe that from the moment he starts the *pūja*, he is a *liṅga* himself. Other Lingayats have the same *pūja* on the 11th day after death (see below).

<sup>12</sup> Today women no longer take part in this ritual, though they formerly did.

<sup>13</sup> For example, *ha:lattuva jena*, milk-pouring day. Non-Lingayats call it *kari jena*, charcoal day. Poorer people perform the milk-pouring ritual on the same day as the burial to avoid the additional expense of entertaining the visitors for another day. For dead boys, it is performed on the evening of burial, although it ought to be performed on the following day. The milk-pouring ritual is not done at all for dead girls except by Lingayats.

<sup>14</sup> No Wodeya, unless he is the son of the deceased, shaves his head, nor does any woman. Belli Gowder reports that no Lingayat Adikiris do, either (1938–1941: 11).

moustaches, whereas the other men should shave their scalps too, even for male children. The widower shaves only his beard, and women do not shave at all. Among Lingayats, all the men who perform the grain-placing ritual must shave their scalps and beards completely.<sup>15</sup>

Before returning to the village, people go to a stream near the burial ground, wash their hands and legs, and sprinkle water over themselves to signify that they have bathed. Then they go back to the village and, on the way, some youths should fall down and bow their heads to the ground. Some older men bless them and say, "Let there be no more death!" Afterwards they leave all the tools near the veranda of the dead person's house. At the time of their return, a light should be burning in that house.

## Cremation

Gauḍas, Ha:ruvas, Toreyas, and two other tiny phratries of Be:ḍas and Kumba:ras all cremate<sup>16</sup> their dead (all except the Ha:ruvas are traditionally non-vegetarian groups). If more than one phratry lives in a particular village, all use the same cremation ground, which is usually located beside a little stream (Reclus 1885: 211; see Drawing 2). Local non-Badagas would certainly not be allowed to use it. Although not essential, in some areas Toreyas carried a corpse to the cremation ground. But this is hardly evidence of the servile status of Toreyas, since Gauḍas, who rank higher, may carry a Toreya corpse in return for the obligation related to a service that a Toreya has previously performed for a Gauḍa family. "Cremation may take place on any day, except Tuesday"—an unlucky day<sup>17</sup> (Thurston 1906: 190; Thurston and Rangachari 1909, I: 111), and it should really occur between noon and sunset (Rhiem 1900: 505).

Once the procession (Fig. 16a) arrives at the burning ground, people remove their shoes, the cot is put down near the wood, and an old man assumes the charge of building the pyre.<sup>18</sup> Meanwhile, some of the cloth on the cot is distributed to very close relatives; it will be used later in a household *pūja*. The flowers and garlands that were deposited on the cot by mourners are now thrown away. All jewelry except for a dead man's silver waist chain is removed and will be taken back to the household of the deceased. However, wealthier families should always leave one small

<sup>15</sup> By the 1960s only the closest relatives and some old men were observing these rules correctly, whereas younger men would just cut one hair from their heads. Lingayats in general do not shave for dead affines, whereas non-Lingayats do: thus, the daughter's husband must shave his head too. By the 1960s, older men would still shave their beards and moustaches off for male children who died, but they would not do so for female ones. The older men shaved completely for adult male dead but not for adult females.

<sup>16</sup> Much of this section follows closely the description in Noble and Noble (1965: 262–66); this is because we were all working in the same area in 1963, attended some of the same funerals, and even made use of the same primary informant, K. Lakshmanan, B.A., to whom I extend thanks. I am also indebted to William A. Noble for much help in providing some of the diagrams and photographs in this monograph. Other drawings were kindly made by Raymond G. Brod, cartographer in the Department of Anthropology, University of Illinois, Chicago.

<sup>17</sup> This restriction is no longer observed. Tuesday was perhaps once prohibited because for each weekday, there is an unlucky cardinal direction, and for Tuesday (as well as for Wednesday, however), this direction is north. The soul starting out on its journey to the north on that day could therefore encounter some misfortune.

<sup>18</sup> There should be no need to purchase firewood, since each house should provide a little of the wood (*kasa mora*) for the pyre. One person from each house carries the wood to the cremation ground beforehand so that the pyre can be built quickly. In former times, when wood was more plentiful, some of the villagers would go to the forest nearby to cut logs. As they returned to the village with their loads, shouting "*o: hau hau*," one or two men from the bereaved house would meet them and bow to the ground in expression of their thanks. Those just returned would bless them and ask them to get up and would then dance again to the Kota music before going to eat.



gold or silver ornament on the body, and a female of any age or phratry must have a silver finger ring at the time of cremation.<sup>19</sup>

At this point, the sturdy cot that has been brought thus far may be substituted by another one fit only for burning, and the corpse is transferred to it. The face is covered, and the corpse on the cot is swung over the pyre three times by three, five, or seven men (Belli Gowder 1923–1941: 10). After a few moments' delay the deceased is placed, lying on the back, on a bed of logs, with the feet toward the south; alternatively, although very rarely, a pyre of bundled sticks and logs, brought previously, is also built up over the cot to be burned. Normally just the body is covered with other logs, and perhaps the wooden parts of the catafalque superstructure. But before this, favorite possessions, like clothing or a walking stick, are placed beside the corpse, and then an embroidered shawl is laid over the entire body so that the head is covered. Once the pyre is completed, women, who have generally been sitting a hundred yards away, pour the contents of their baskets (Fig. 13a) over the pyre and toss the empty baskets on top.<sup>20</sup>

Before the body is burned, the son may say the following invocation:

O begotten forefathers! O ancient ancestors!  
With all the charity [you've done] I,  
Who was born to my mother and my father,  
[Here at the] funeral of my dead mother [or  
father],  
Without fail, alas! I am placing the first fire-  
brand,  
Witnessed by all the hundreds of gods.<sup>21</sup>

Then the man, preferably the eldest son of the dead, lights the pyre ("Miles" 1933: 75). It is not a ritual requirement that the pyre be lit at the head end first, as in Sanskrit funerals, nor that the man avert his face, although the smoke may cause him to do so. Everyone present adds a token stick to the fire. All the foodstuffs brought are usually burned, but no clarified butter is thrown on the pyre today (although kerosene sometimes is). In former times, the corpse was covered in "large quantities" of clarified butter (Muzzy 1844: 359), and some of the foodstuffs were given to Kotas or Harijans (Jagor 1876: 199; 1914: 44).<sup>22</sup> Once the pyre is burning well (Fig. 16b), a final handful of coins may be thrown into the flames by several of the bereaved relatives as payment for a toll in the afterworld. Most of those present will then

<sup>19</sup> Early accounts describe more wealth being destroyed at a cremation than is seen today, e.g., "gold or silver rings for fingers and ears, silver chains which are wound around the neck and waist of the corpse, some money which is tied in his upper cloth . . ." (Mörke 1849: 104, trans.; see also Jagor 1876: 199). Later, "the molten silver and gold are cleaned and kept." This description suggested that other items were also needed for the journey to the realm of the dead, including a bow and arrow to protect oneself (Mörke 1849: 105). Today anyone finding some molten metal later may keep it. The widow may even later wear any of her husband's jewelry, except for the neck chain.

<sup>20</sup> According to Malinowski's student, A. Aiyappan, a "relic of *Sati* is now seen . . . when the widow's robe is thrown on the funeral pyre" (1948: 117). He is probably referring to King (1870: 6–7), who mentions, in regard to Badagas, that "the widow merely pretends to rush towards the blazing pile to sacrifice herself with her husband's dead body, and is pulled back by her friends, who throw her robe on the funeral pyre instead, and she herself commences a new lease of life with new clothing." Harkness (1832: 134) and Muzzy (1844: 359) had earlier observed the same thing. Today the widowed woman is not allowed close to the pyre, and none of her clothing or hair is burned.

Among those throwing coins into the flames nowadays may be women and children, some even vying with each other to see who will throw the most money. It is below the dignity of adult Badagas to pick up any scattered coins, but Untouchables and Badaga children may do so.

<sup>21</sup> The full Badaga text is given by Hockings (1988: 144–45, no. 147) and Natesa Sastri (1892: 842).

<sup>22</sup> The Badagas of the 19th century were given clarified butter by their Toda partners, but such transactions, for the most part, ended long ago. The Todas to this day typically pour such butter on top of the pyre. Ignited butter drops and spreads flames to lower parts of the pyre. Thus, in a strange way, the pyre is ignited from the top downward.

leave, although a few men always stay to the end. To purify themselves, people first go to the stream nearby to sprinkle some water on their heads and rinse out their mouths before returning to the village. Those remaining listen for the sound of the skull cracking open, which in Hindu thinking marks the moment when the soul leaves the body. Weather permitting, the fire burns into the night (but a corpse burns up in an amazingly short time). A villager carries the cot back, in earlier times getting the half of the embroidered shawl that was left on the cot for his trouble.

Early reports speak of the Kotas tending the fire (e.g., Schad 1911: 7). In recent times, they quickly returned to the bereaved house's veranda, where a son or other close relative gave each of the musicians from the associate's band 7 measures of flour in one of the cloths from the superstructure that stood in the yard before the house. Those in other bands traditionally got 4 measures. The former group of men would also each get 8 annas, a half-rupee, and the latter would receive 6 annas (in the 1930s). The source of the flour is a levy of 4 measures (about 15 liters) from each household, which is collected by a man designated by the headman. The son and son-in-law of the deceased would each give the Kota leaders 2 rupees (in 1937). At the same time, the Kota associate of the son is told to come on the morrow with his wife and to bring five pots (made by Kotas).

In the 1960s Gauda women sometimes gave the foods to Toreyas. If the *korumbu* ritual occurs within the next day or two, the elder of the family now reminds everyone of this before they disperse. If it is to occur some days later, he has to send a messenger to remind relatives about the ceremony.

## Concluding Rituals

On the first night after a cremation or burial, close visiting relatives remain in the village, and men gather at the bereaved house or at the Great House. There they sing or talk during much of the night, perhaps having a noted local singer there to perform the traditional ballads (Hockings 1997). They tend the one central lamp in the interior doorway, which must remain lighted right from the time of the death until the coming morning, and so this rite is called *di:vige ka:padu*, taking care of the lamp.<sup>23</sup>

The next morning the Kota associate and his wife should come, deliver the new pots, receive one *baḷḷa* (about 1.4 liters) of grain, and take a meal on the veranda of the bereaved house. Then a few Badaga men, at least one from each household, go back to the cremation ground for the *karitaḷḷo:du* (picking through the charcoal) cere-

<sup>23</sup> Badagas believe that after cremation or burial, the soul immediately starts its travels to the otherworld and that this light will guide it. They also believe that if the lamp dies down by itself, prosperity will leave that household. Hence, on a normal night, a Badaga pays respect to the lamp but then carefully extinguishes it before sleeping (Natesa Sastri 1892: 839).

mony. They carry the pots filled with water in order to dampen the ashes, then collect all bone fragments on a bracken frond<sup>24</sup> and tie them in a small cloth. Children may not take part in this rite. The men now look for any coins in the ashes. Sometimes a larger denomination coin was purposely thrown into the pyre: if found, it indicated the men had indeed picked carefully through the ashes for bone. One fragment, with a little ash, is kept in another separate cloth or small box. Later, in remembrance of the dead, *pūja* is performed on the remains.<sup>25</sup>

An old man, usually the one who led the grain-placing rite, calls everyone together and gives each a handful of little millet.<sup>26</sup> The man asks, "Is it alright?" and some answer, "Yes." After that, if someone comes late—he had been behind a bush, for example—he cannot receive millet from that man but can still get some from another man present. They stand in a circle around the cremation spot, with a break usually on the north side of the circle, through which the soul may depart. A little clarified butter is put on a leaf and placed on the puddle of water at the burning site. Each man throws some millet into the puddle (*batta bi:rudu*), in order of his lineage's seniority, as though sowing a field, while simultaneously uttering a final prayer for the dead, the words of which are as follows:

May the old ones and the young ones who have died [and become] clay;

May people of that age and people of this age, Those [who have become] dust,

Who have died [and become] clay,

May they all mingle with their maximal lineage!<sup>27</sup>

Then the leader holds the bone in the white cloth while each person touches it. This is the most important act of the day.<sup>28</sup>

The bundle of bones, together with some culms of Bermuda grass, is buried by any man two feet down in a stone-lined depository found in every cremation ground. After each funeral, the stone-lined depository (Drawing 2) is dug out afresh, and water is poured into it.<sup>29</sup>

When the people return to their village, they bathe and perhaps shave their heads and beards, and so regain a state of purity. They may recommence their work, which was halted at the beginning of the funeral. Some of those who performed the grain-placing ritual, including affines, go to the village green and have their heads shaved by

<sup>24</sup> Called *ta:ve*, or *Pteris aquilina*.

<sup>25</sup> It is wrapped in a piece of cloth that was saved at the cremation. While no special power is attributed to the remnant, people think they are retaining something of their ancestors. On the other hand, it would seem that, at least in the 19th century, ashes had a sacred power, since "The younger Badaga children almost all carry on their necklaces small talismans in the shape of discs kneaded out of earth which is collected from under the pyre of burnt corpses" (Jagor 1876: 196, trans.—or does he mean the cremation ash?).

<sup>26</sup> Formerly, this was foxtail millet (*Setaria italica*), and he should take 18.5 liters (five measures) of it with him, together with a small amount of clarified butter carried in a cup made out of the leaves of the castor-oil plant (*Ricinus communis*; Natesa Sastri 1892: 842).

A modern informant says that the break in the circle may not necessarily be at the north side, since the realm of the dead is thought to be in different directions, depending on the particular village or commune.

<sup>27</sup> The full Badaga text is given in Hockings (1988: 147–48, no. 152) and in Natesa Sastri (1892: 843). As they are about to throw the grain, the leader says, "Alright, shall we throw?" If there are any delays because someone is not ready, he cannot say "No," so just says "a:h," which would mean "Wait!"

<sup>28</sup> For the full Badaga texts, see Hockings (1988: 147, no. 151) and Natesa Sastri (1892: 844). If the family wants, the bundle may be brought home and kept in a safe, clean place until it can be buried in some special patch or in a favorite field or even until it can be taken to the great Pērūr temple in Coimbatore District. In this unusual case, *pūja* is performed there, and then the bundle is thrown into the River Noyyāl. Harkness's account of the funeral, our earliest, is unique in claiming that the bones were buried in "an earthen pot, that they would bury . . . some three or four feet deep, marking the spot with a circle of stones" (1832: 135). This observation links early Badaga practice directly with the prehistoric cinerary burials on Nilgiri hilltops (Hockings 1976; Noble 1976).

a Badaga or a Tamil barber.<sup>30</sup> Members of the dead person's major lineage (*kutti*), however, should not bathe until after the *korumbu* ritual some days later.

That afternoon there is a common feast for all who were at the funeral. Closer friends and relatives must attend this feast. The meal<sup>31</sup> must be prepared in the house of the bereaved, but it is not necessarily eaten there. It may instead be more conveniently taken in the largest house of that lineage. Male affines cook the food, which should include mutton, and they meet the cost. Meanwhile, their wives, who are daughters, sons' daughters, or sons' sons' daughters of the deceased, take the bone fragment collected that morning, wash it in a nearby stream, and bring it back to the house to be the object of a *pūja*. It is afterwards thrown in a stream if the family does not wish to keep it on a shelf in an ancestral shrine, and the feast begins. Later that house is cleaned and the floor purified in the usual manner by sprinkling cow-dung wash.

Some days after the funeral,<sup>32</sup> a ceremony to release the soul, called *korumbu*, is performed at the Great House. This is not done for children or for any vegetarian Badagas. For men it will be on the next Sunday night after the funeral, for women on the next Thursday or Sunday night. Since Monday is the day sacred to male gods and Friday the day sacred to goddesses, the *korumbu* must be performed on the eve of either day, and it continues until dawn. Only men participate, beginning late in the evening, while the widow must stay outside the house. A Toreya village servant should beat a drum and ring a bell to summon participants to the ceremony. In the 1930s he was paid 1.25 rupees and 10 measures of rice (about 37 liters) for such services. Otherwise the headman himself comes to the bereaved house and sends some other messengers to invite the villagers to attend, at least one man from each house.

They start by lighting a stick of the berried box wood, which burns like a candle. However, it is soon substituted by an oil lamp. A large, flat drying basket (Hockings 1988: 368, Fig. 26) is filled with grain and held at the arched doorway (Hockings 1999: Fig. 4) between the inner room (*o:ga mane*) and the outer one (*ida mane*) by two men, including the man who led the grain-placing ritual. He stirs the grain around several times with a knife previously carried in that earlier ritual. Some other men who carried knives may do likewise. Then each person in turn comes and bows his head down to touch the raw millet (nowadays

<sup>29</sup> One such pit was described as being 4 meters in circumference (Schmidt 1894: 257).

<sup>30</sup> The prime reason for shaving the head and beard is to ensure that no grain that was intended for the corpse has fallen there: it is thought that this could have a bad effect. For the same reason, one man stands beside the cot and, as people deposit the grain mixture on the corpse, he brushes their heads to remove any grain that may have fallen in the hair; otherwise they do this for themselves. Thurston reports a more elaborate shaving ritual:

they repair to a stream, where a member of the bereaved family shaves a Toreya partially or completely. Some take a razor, and, after removing a patch of hair, pass the Toreya on to a barber. All the agnates are then shaved by a Badaga or by a barber. The chief mourner then prostrates himself on the ground, and is blessed by all. He and the Toreya proceed to the house of the deceased. Taking a three-pronged twig of *Rhodomyrtus tomentosus*, and placing a minige (*Argyreia*) leaf on the prongs, he thrusts it into a rubbish heap near the house. He then places a small quantity of *sāmai* grain, called street food, on the leaf, and, after sprinkling it thrice with water, goes away (Thurston 1906: 198; Thurston and Rangachari 1909, I: 119).

The Toreya is shaved first because of a fiction that he is an "eldest son" of the deceased (Belli Gowder 1938–1941: 12).

<sup>31</sup> Their eating of rice and beans, however, once used to be forbidden until the *korumbu* ceremony (Belli Gowder 1923–1941: 11; 1938–1941: 10).

<sup>32</sup> It was reported that early in the 19th century, the *korumbu* was always performed on a Monday, but this must have meant Sunday night and Monday morning (Birch 1838: 104–5).

It is not performed for any boy without a moustache or for any girl before she has undergone menarche, unless she was already married at the time of death. However, on the morning just after a child's funeral, well-to-do parents will give a meal to any relatives present, while poor people at least give coffee. Then, on that same day, the relatives always purify themselves.

Traditionally, four plant leaves, four measures of grain, four measures of beans, and four new pots were used in the rites (Natesa Sastri 1892: 841).

In former times, but not today, it was the practice, if a headman was widowed, for his brother to perform the *korumbu* ceremony in his place. This was so because a headman would lose prestige and the right to make offerings (*ka:nike*) to the gods if he ceremonially became a widower.

After the burial, Wodeyas go back to the house of the bereaved, view the lamp that is burning there, and then feast themselves. No prayers are offered. On the following day, they pour milk, along with nine different kinds of grain, onto the grave. Then, on the Monday after the burial, the *tiṭṭi* ceremony is accomplished during daytime, unlike the *korumbu* in other Badaga phratries. If the burial occurred on a Monday, the most sacred day of the week, then the *tiṭṭi* will be performed on the following Monday. Invitations are sent to all the male rel-

perhaps rice) in the basket. As each man touches the grain he says, "May he go to God and be in a good state."<sup>33</sup> Then all the men, still standing in the inner room, pray that the soul of the dead may rest in peace. Women, who are standing outside on the veranda, must begin to weep on hearing this.

There follows another rite called "pot-blackening" (*maḍake kanapadu*).<sup>34</sup> Some sticks of the false bog-myrtle are used to make a fire in the hearth of the house from which the grain mixture had earlier been distributed. Two new pots are used: one should be supplied by the Kota associate of the eldest man in the bereaved family and the other by the Kota associate of the *guru* or the mother's brother. The group says a prayer:

He says he has eaten.

[Just as] our ancestors acted, as those strong ones acted, we have acted too.

New has not become old, and old has not become new.

No youth carries his head [high forever].

Join, alas, with your caste-group!

Join, alas, with your people!

Join, alas, with your clan!

Seize hold [of them] too!<sup>35</sup>

When the fire is burning well, the man in charge takes the old man's pot around to the other villagers who are his agnates and who now touch it. He then takes the *guru*'s pot around to the affines, and they touch it. Then he holds each pot in turn over the fire in order to soot its interior somewhat and thereby make it usable.

"The chief mourner, accompanied by two Badagas carrying new pots, proceeds to a stream, where the pots are cleaned with cow-dung, and rubbed over with the culms" of geranium or lemon grass (any of three species of *Cymbopogon*; Thurston and Rangachari 1909, I: 120). The chief mourner takes with him a lit torch, consisting of dry grasses (*bambe*; Hockings and Pilot-Raichoor 1992: 397) or false bog-myrtle leaves, to light his way, and he drops it outside the door. The men who accompany him to the stream or tap are from among the second, third, or fourth men in the earlier grain-placing line: one carries the *guru*'s pot and fills it. They bring water, mainly to use in cooking some of the freshly husked grain, and put it in the inner room of the house. Although both pots are supposed to boil, only one is actually put on the hearth.

Then the mortar, set into the floor, is cleaned

atives. The feast is initiated by the same man who had carried the crowbar to the burial ground. At the *nitti* ceremony he carries a crowbar again, and cooks a special food in the house of the bereaved. Nine elders are called from the village, and they sit cross-legged, each with a brass plate on his lap. The man serves them the special food. The eldest son of the deceased is the only Wodeya to receive a tonsure. If there is no son, the younger brother of the deceased receives it. The tonsured man is then given the *linga* case (*karadage*) that had belonged to the deceased, but without a *linga*.

All this takes place in the back part of the inner room where the men are sitting. The one who has cooked stands in the doorway between the two rooms, then lies prostrate in it while the nine elders say blessings over him. Then they eat the food, and the remainder is given to any others present.

<sup>33</sup> Among Lingayats, after the eldest male of the family has done this, the *guru* must be the second one to do so.

<sup>34</sup> Among Lingayats, it is compulsory that a *guru* be present at this rite, as he symbolizes the cooperation between affines and agnates.

<sup>35</sup> For the full Badaga text, see Hockings (1988: 146, no. 149) and Natesa Sastri (1892: 841).

with a brush consisting of a bunch of *hubbe*.<sup>36</sup> One man pours some grain from the drying basket into this stone and pounds it for a few seconds. Then another close relative takes over and does more pounding, then winnowing, then pounding again, winnowing again, pounding for a third time and winnowing once more, in order to remove all the husks. This work takes about ten minutes. Some grain is left in the pounding hole, beside which the brush now lies. A brass tumbler of water is left all night on top of this grain; it is for the departing soul to drink.<sup>37</sup> When the water is nearly boiling, the husked grain is added, together with a few beans and a small amount of rice that has been especially preserved from the grain-placing ritual. These items are cooked together without any salt until all the water is absorbed. "Then the eldest member eats a handful . . . and the others also do the same. . . . This eating is called the eating of the *hiṇḍiya kûlu*—the tasting of the funeral rice and is considered a great sign of attachment and caste union" (Natesa Sastri 1892: 840). Afterward it is eaten by all the men, who have stayed awake all night, tending the lamp, drinking coffee, and talking. Some beans (usually *Vicia faba*) and peas are boiled in a separate pot. They are mixed with some of the grain and made into three little balls, and this offering is immediately placed on the roof as food for the departing spirit.<sup>38</sup>

On the following morning a handful of straw is pulled out of the thatch (but today has to come from somewhere else, as roofs are tiled) and is lit inside the outer room to remove pollution. The family members and other close relatives of the deceased do not bathe until the entire funerary ritual is over, but on the following morning, they can all take a much-needed purifying bath and are then free to resume their normal household activities. They have regained *sudda*, a state of purity. Those who have not yet paid their *tellaṭṭi* (see above, p. 5, n.11) now do so. The tools used in digging the grave—and the funeral cane cot, if it was not destroyed by flames—are washed, and the latter is sprinkled with a purifying cow-dung wash. Until this point in the funeral, the cot may neither be washed nor reenter a house: it is kept in the yard. At the same time, the knives, sickles, and winnowing basket that were used in the grain placing and the drying basket used the night before are all cleaned with water (the great purifier all over India). Then the baskets are also smeared with cow-dung wash. Thereafter they may be returned to normal household use.

<sup>36</sup> Small plants of various species (Hockings and Pilot-Raichoor 1992: 596).

<sup>37</sup> Lingayats do not have this custom.

<sup>38</sup> In former days, we are told, "the eldest son of the deceased places seven balls of cooked rice on plantain or *mīnige* (*Argyria*) leaves, and repeats the names of his ancestors and various relations" (Thurston 1913: 363).

Lingayats do not put food on the roof, but they do pound a little millet and then cook it. Most Lingayats now have a high-level *jangama* priest or a *guru* (spiritual advisor) or *guru's* representative come, probably from the Mysore area nearly a hundred miles away, to perform a *pūja* on the grave (Pls. 14b and 15a). Except for the minority faction that approves of intermarriage with Mysore Lingayats, this is performed on the 11th day after death. The man stands on the southernmost of the five *linga* stones facing toward the north, which is the abode of Siva, and he himself is thought to become a *linga*. One or two men wash his feet, dry them, and put sacred ash on them. Then they put some flowers on them, light some incense sticks, and wave these around in a circular motion on the north side of the man's feet. The sticks are then stuck in the soil beside the stone. Then the same motion is performed with some camphor burning in a special 18-inch metal ladle only used at funerals (*ba:kana*). Then a ritual offering (*ka:nike*) of money, totaling 1.25 rupees (formerly 5 silver 4-anna coins), is placed on the *guru's* feet. All these acts of *pūja* take place to the south of where the corpse is buried.

Then two coconuts are offered at the feet of the *guru*. Their water falls on the grave, and some is sprinkled on

The widow or widower may now reenter the inner and more sacred room (*o:ga mane*) of the home or the outer room of the Great House for the first time since the death, may again work in the fields, and, in the case of a widower with a second wife, may now have intercourse with her. A widow can now wear jewelry again, except for her necklace. Should the bereaved spouse want to remarry, it is possible once the *korumbu* is over, although for one year afterwards, the household cannot be the site of any auspicious ceremony. Another funeral, on the other hand, would be performed there if necessary.

Since about 1940, some families have revered a little cremation ash in the house on each anniversary of a death, before a photograph of the deceased. This *ilu muttudu* (touching the bone) may be done by day or night. Some perform such an act at the burial or cremation ground instead. A few have buried family members in private plots or fields, and so pay their respects there at a stone erected to mark the burial. Some may invite relatives for such a ceremony; others do not, but distribute food to the participants. Some people work afterwards, others take the day off. Evidently such innovative observations are copying the Hindu or Christian practice but are quite variable.

## Commemoration of the Ancestors

Finally, there used to be an eight-day commemorative ceremony (*manevale*) for an entire generation of the dead once all had passed away. However, the last one was performed in 1936, after which it became too costly to stage.<sup>39</sup>

This event commemorates all of the recently deceased in a particular commune and is celebrated in its head village during March. It would only be observed after the last member of a particular generation had died, and then only if the heavy expenses of feeding several thousand visitors for eight days could be afforded. Monday being the most sacred day of the week, the *manevale* begins and ends on a Monday. But before this, a large supply of requisites for the guests has been purchased in town: rice, legumes, ghee, curry materials, tobacco, and at one time opium. The village community as a whole meets these expenses, sends out invitations, and organizes the function. The site of the celebration is readily seen from a distance, because a superstructure perhaps 40 to

the *guru's* feet. The coconut halves are placed on the earth fill beside the stone the *guru* is standing on. Next, any flower is plucked and dipped into a tumbler of milk. It is used to sprinkle milk on the central stone, then onto the *guru's* feet, and then onto the remaining three stones; the hand moves around them clockwise as it sprinkles the milk. After this, some milk is poured from the tumbler, first on the *guru's* feet and then on the stones. This is poured with a clockwise motion over the stones, and whatever little milk is still remaining is poured over the central stone. So long as the *guru* stands on the central stone, he is a *linga*.

The man who has performed these acts now stands aside, and the *guru*, still on the stone, puts his hands up with palms together and his eyes shut, and says a prayer in Kannada that roughly translates as, "Now we witness that the soul of \_\_\_\_\_ has gone to heaven. In the presence of all this big crowd I pray to God that if he [she] has done any sin, all the sins may be forgiven through Lord Bassava, and the soul may rest in peace with you, O God!" This is repeated by the crowd, line by line. Then one or two of the men wash and dry the *guru's* feet before he steps off the stone.

<sup>39</sup> Wodeya and other Lingayat villages, as well as the Ha:ruvas, all traditionally vegetarian in diet, did not have this custom. Although it was not observed for the past 60 years, I will use the present tense in this account. I rely here on a few elderly informants and on the cursory descriptions that may be found in Birch (1838: 105); J. Josenhans (in Metz 1852: 42–43); Metz (1864: 89–90); Hesse (1870: 77); Basel Evangelical Missionary Society (1879: 75); Thurston (1906: 199–201); Francis (1908: 134); Thurston and Rangachari (1909: I: 121–23); Samikannu (1922: 30–31); Belli Gowder (1923–1941: 13–15); and Noble and Noble (1965: 268–69).

Unfortunately, we do not have a full roster of the *manevales* celebrated during the past two centuries. A partial list of celebrations would include the following:

at Kaḍana:ḍu,	began March	1795 (estimate)
"	"	1845 (estimate)
"	"	1905 (Thurston and Rangachari 1909, I: 121–22)

50 feet high is erected there and covered with cloths of various colors. This will be destroyed on the following Monday, until which time everybody celebrates by eating, drinking, dancing, singing, and smoking (Birch 1838: 105; Hockings 1980: Pls. 13–14).

The celebration would seem to be modeled on the dry funeral of the Kotas (and to a lesser extent on that of the Todas), but it is not at all similar to any event that the ancestral Badagas observed in Mysore.<sup>40</sup> Kotas perform their celebration for all who have died in one village during the preceding year (Mandelbaum 1959: 193–98).

The Badaga commemoration is held at the head village of a commune, but only after the appropriate permission has been obtained. This has first to be gained from the Hette temple at Be:rage:ni (Hette being the divine ancestress of the Badagas), and then from Tandana:ḍu village, and then again from any Todas, Kotas, and Kuṛumbas living in the vicinity. Finally, permission is obtained from all the headmen of the four plateau divisions, or *na:ḍu*, and from some prominent priests (Belli Gowder 1938–1941: 11).

The ceremony could actually be said to begin on Sunday, when a man boils 5 measures of *korali* and then dries it before dehusking.<sup>41</sup>

The next morning, a *pūja* is offered in a local temple.

“Later some earth from a well-used place was dug up with an iron-pointed dibble made especially for the occasion by Kotas. The earth, which represented all who had died during the past twelve years [i.e., in the case of Ittalar], was tied into a *seelai* [i.e., *si:le*] shawl-like cloth which Todas embroidered for the Badagas and placed on a funeral-cot which was brought to the earth-digging locale. From this place the cot was carried to the funeral-temple *kerie* [i.e., front yard], where villagers placed a stick, also representing those who died, upon the cot” (Noble and Noble 1965: 268).

As more and more guests arrive from other places, some Todas greet them and act as receptionists, while Kotas or Kuṛumbas play music. The Kuṛumba watchman for the village brings a bamboo ladder to build the catafalque.<sup>42</sup> He ceremoniously cuts the first bamboo, and then the work begins. The segregation of the low-status Toreya phratry is now symbolized by the building of a second catafalque specifically for their ancestors. Once both are ready, which will be before nightfall on Monday, the Kuṛumba stands on the work yard between them, surrounded by the Badaga elders, and the dancing begins. This and the

at Pedduva,	began	March 1840 (estimate)
	"	March 21, 1921 (Samikannu 1922: 30–31)
at Ku:kal	"	February 23, 1852 (Josenhans, in Metz 1852: 42–43)
at Ke:ti	"	March 24, 1879 (Basel Evangelical Missionary Society 1879: 75)
at Ittalaru	"	March 1902
	"	" 1914
at Aṭṭubailu	"	April 1902
	"	" 1914
at So:lu:ru	"	March 1908 (estimate)
at Tanga:ḍu	"	" 1908
	"	" 1936
at Nundua	"	" 1915

These nine villages are remembered as doing the *ma-nevale*; eight of them are the head village for their respective communes. They are located in the three main divisions of the Badaga territory, but not in Kunda, the fourth and latest one to be founded. Numerous other head villages are not remembered as having had this celebration.

<sup>40</sup> The Kanarese Gaudas, who appear to be the population from which most 16th century Badagas broke away, have an annual family commemoration for dead ancestors in the month of Mituna (June–July; Thurston and Rangachari 1909, II: 269–72).

<sup>41</sup> “The person in charge of this operation should be careful that no flies sit on the grains while they are drying; not even the shadow of a human being should fall on them. The grains are kept in a new pot in the ceremonial house in the village” (Belli Gowder 1938–1941: 11).

<sup>42</sup> That at Kadana:ḍu in 1905 was seven tiers high. It “was built of wood and bamboo, and decorated with silk and wollen [*sic*] fabrics, flags, and umbrellas. Inside the ground floor were a cot with a mattress and pillow, and the stem of a plantain tree. The souls of the ancestors are supposed to be reclining on the cot, resting their heads on the pillow, and chewing the plantain, while the umbrellas protect them from the sun and rain. The ear ornaments of all those who have died since the previous [com-



public feeding continue all week, without any further ritual. At night, mythological street dramas may be performed.

At Kadana:ḍu, in 1905,

"sixty-nine petty bazārs and three beer taverns had been opened for the convenience of all classes of people . . . On Wednesday at 10 A.M. people from the adjoining villages were announced, and the Kota band, with the village people, went forward, greeted them, and brought them to the tower (car). As each man approached it, he removed his turban, stooped over the pillow and laid his head on it, and then went to form a ring for the dance. The dancers wore skirts made of white long-cloth, white and cream silks and satins with border of red and blue trimming, frock dresses, and dressing-gowns, while the coats, blouses, and jackets were of the most gaudy colors of silk, velvet, velveteen, tweed, and home-spun. As each group of people arrived, they went first to the temple door, saluted the god, and went to the basement of the tower [catafalque] to venerate the deceased, and then proceeded to join the ring for the dance, where they danced for an hour, received their supplies of rice, etc., and cleared off. Thursday and Friday were the grandest days. Nearly three thousand females and six thousand males assembled on Thursday. To crown all the confusion, there appeared nearly a thousand Badagas armed with new mamoties (spades). They came on dancing from some distance, rushed into the crowd, and danced round the tower. These Badagas belonged to the gang of public works, local fund, and municipal maistries" (i.e., foremen; Thurston 1906: 199–200).

On the following Saturday, Kota men arrive carrying wooden spears, their one-time weapon, and are received ceremoniously by the villagers. Men who are affines to the Badaga village dig some holes to hold pots in an appropriate spot, and then rice and beans are cooked in the big pots in a process that goes on throughout the night, under the direction of affinal men.<sup>43</sup>

The next morning, Sunday, a goat or sheep is sacrificed to the heaps of cooked rice by a Kurumba priest, and a little rice is mixed with the animal's blood and buried in the ground. Some food is served by way of alms to any low-caste people who may be present.

On the Monday, the final day, another goat is sacrificed at one leg of the main catafalque, after which the catafalques are removed and dismantled.<sup>44</sup> "Cloth, floral decorations, paper and poles were carried to the cremation ground and burned along with the bound up earth and the dummy stick," which represented each deceased person (Noble and Noble 1965: 269). Men affinal to the village then have their heads shaved in token of

memoration] ceremony should be placed on the cot" (Thurston 1906: 199).

<sup>43</sup> Women are never involved in ceremonial cooking.

<sup>44</sup> The Nobles (who were not eyewitnesses) report that at Ittalar commune, "On the seventh day funeral dancers and musicians visited four peaks adjacent to Ittalar [i.e., Ittalar], where music-making and dancing continued on the top of each one in turn. Upon returning from the peaks in the afternoon the crowd dismantled the *gudi-kattu*" (Noble and Noble 1965: 269).

their mourning. In the evening, *korali* grain that had been kept in a pot since the Sunday before the ceremony began is now cooked together with beans. This food is offered to the dead as *prasād* by placing seven balls of it on the roof of the temple. An elder then pronounces this prayer:

Earlier ancestors, these are for you [two balls];  
Ancestresses and forefathers, these are for you  
[two balls];  
Mother and Father, these are for you [two  
balls];  
Your share has come, this is for you [one ball].  
For any deficiencies we made during your fun-  
erals, we now make compensation.  
May death cease! May sorrow cease!  
May [everything] quickly become good!  
By both the meritoriousness of our ancient an-  
cestors  
And the merit of our begotten forefathers,  
May these dead go and join [them]!”

Afterwards, the rest of the food is eaten by all belonging to the bereaved families (Belli Gowder 1938–1941: 12). Then, the next morning, “every-  
one took a purifying after-funeral bath” (Noble  
and Noble 1965: 269).

## Funeral Symbolism: Some Conclusions

What has been described to this point is the traditional Badaga funeral, with all the detail available. Even forty years ago it was evident that numerous items in the ritual were being omitted, partly through faulty memory, partly through disinclination, and partly to save time. The sequence of events, too, was sometimes not followed "correctly." Many villages have not seen Kota musicians in a lifetime. It is thus not uncommon for much of the described ritual to be omitted today, while some items have been moved in the protocol. Some people now do the grain-placing ceremony with rice in the front yard, while others—just very close relatives—actually do it inside the house before removing the corpse. And although women are not supposed to proceed beyond the Funeral Grassland, as they have no further rites to perform, I have often seen them throwing earth or food offerings into the grave. Nor does anyone stop them any more if they come to the *korumbu* rites.

The normal state of a Badaga being is one of purity, *sudda*, which is promoted by daily worship and forbearance from sinning. That state is suspended or, rather, replaced temporarily by a state of impurity, *ti:tu*, under certain circumstances (such as contact with menses, childbirth, and death). (Impurity can also be acquired in other situations, such as through marriage, intercourse, or simply by eating with a non-Badaga.)

From the moment of death, the corpse and all immediate family are polluted, and the people remain so until the conclusion of the funeral. Use of the household's milk store (*ha:go:tu*), if still extant, is now suspended, for milk is a pure sub-

stance. We have seen, however, that there is normally a liminal phase, a transitional period, between the earlier state of *sudda* in the household and the moment of death: this is when the invalid lies, corpselike, inside the house as relatives come from elsewhere to bless him or her and to seek blessings in return. After the *ti:tu*, which all (except priests) who participate in the funeral will suffer, a second liminal phase follows immediately on the disposal of the corpse and continues for the nearer relatives until the departing spirit has been fed at the *korumbu* rites (see Drawing 5).

It is noticeable that in the Badaga Hindu funeral, unlike in the Christian one, priests do not play a central role. A priest will often be present, but only as a member of the village community or as a relative of the deceased. He tries to maintain a certain sanctity and residual purity by not eating any of the food offered, for it is polluted by its association with death. He never touches the corpse by way of respecting it. (There is no special procedure for the funeral of a priest.)

The funeral itself, for all its multitude of petty rules and ritual observations, has a quadripartite dramaturgical structure to it, which my presentation of the data under six headings may have obscured somewhat. Those data, moreover, were given as far as possible in a chronological sequence, whereas the quadripartite structure is one of themes that pervade the entire observation.

The loss of a member of the community, especially of an elderly one, threatens the stability not just of the deceased's household but also of the community as a whole, which explains why the hamlet headman rather than a son of the de-

ceased is given charge of the operations. The headman's prime concern is to reestablish the social stability that has just been ruptured. This is done—unconsciously, no doubt—by performing rituals that promote four basic principles of social stability, namely hierarchy and social divisions, auspiciousness, sex distinctions, and kin relationships. A dramatic tension is present throughout the funeral, because each of these principles is associated with a counteractivity of serious import.

A fundamental principle of Badaga society is that each phratry is divided into clans or, more specifically, into intermarrying categories that anthropologists label agnates and affines. At every point in the funeral, this separation is reemphasized through quite specific rules about what the agnates must do and what affines can or cannot do. There seems to be a latent tension between the two categories during the funeral, arising from the fact that the local people, the agnates, have either lost a daughter entrusted to them by the affines or, alternatively, have lost her husband, which therefore raises questions about the widow's future security.

The social hierarchy is threatened by evil spirits that are thought to be attracted under these sorrowful circumstances and that congregate especially near any funeral ground. The idea is common to many cultures:

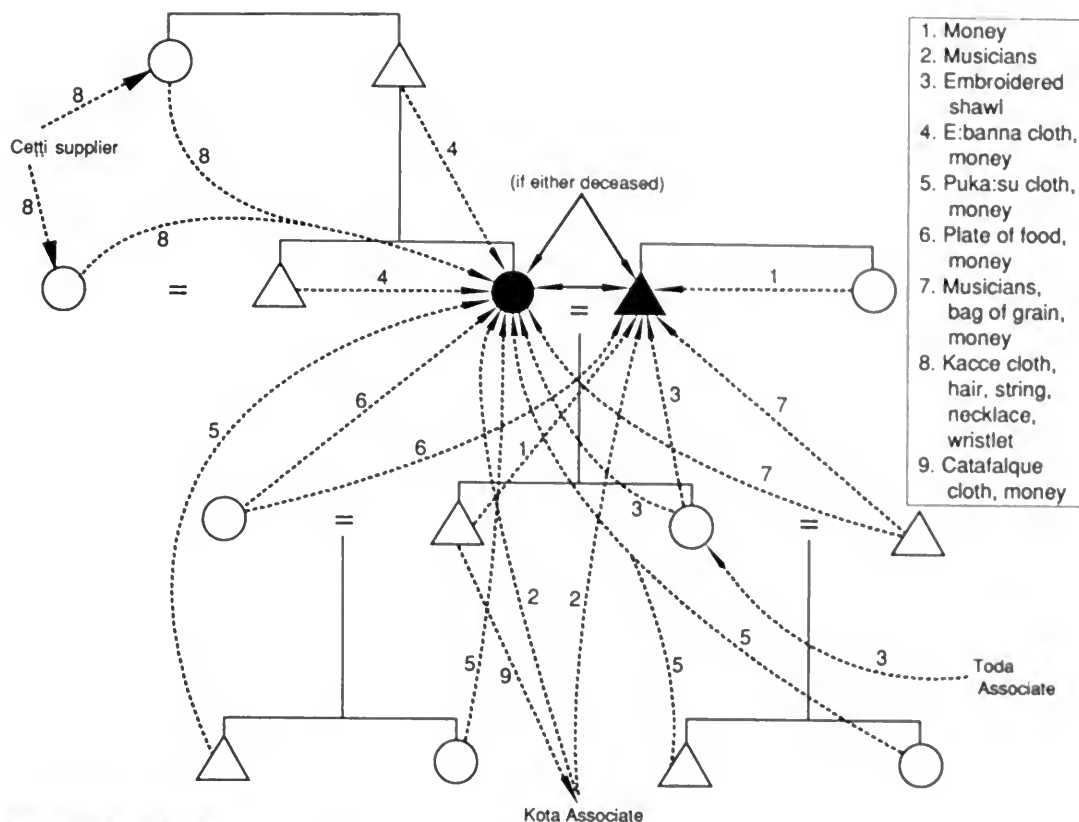
It is a belief familiar to anthropologists . . . that the body is at certain times particularly exposed to the attacks of evil spirits . . . ; its diminished powers of resistance have to be reinforced by magical means. The period which follows death is particularly dangerous in this respect; that is why the corpse must be exorcised and be forearmed against demons. This preoccupation inspires, at least partly, the ablutions and various rites connected with the body immediately after death: such as, for instance, the custom of closing the eyes and other orifices of the body with coins or beads; it also imposes on the survivors the duty of keeping the deceased company during this dreaded period, to keep watch by his side and to beat gongs frequently in order to keep malignant spirits at bay. (Hertz 1960: 33–34)

Evil spirits (*pe:i*) are the embodiment of ambiguity: they are neither human nor divine, neither male nor female, neither living nor dead; they are present yet invisible. At numerous points in the funeral, they need to be thwarted in order to protect social stability by ambiguous performances. Thus, we see Badaga men and women dancing energetically in front of a gaily decorated, temporary abode. The impression is of a sort of sec-

ond wedding, with the widow dressed rather like a bride, covering her face while weeping and wearing a special nose ring. Men shout “*o: hau hau*” in jubilation, as they do at auspicious ceremonies. When the other mourners circle the corpse three times in a counterclockwise direction, the spouse circles it in a clockwise direction, which in all other ritual contexts is the auspicious one. In nineteenth-century reports we read of shots fired in the air and can still see processions with knife blades, some of which are fantastic in design, held in the air with points upward (Fig. 9a and Drawing 2). Even the lime halves stuck on some of these blades are believed to “put lime juice into the eyes” of the hovering spirits. Iron protects the living from evil spirits, so heavy iron tools are carried in procession to the graveyard, although some are not actually used there. The site of the grave is first stabbed with a crowbar. Elsewhere, milk and grain are thrown onto the ground. Drums are beaten and horns sounded during the procession to create a frightful noise, while food and coins are thrown in the air. Probably, too, the giving of a turban to a female corpse and the ritual requirement that some men dance in what might be viewed as a female dress are further attempts to confuse the evil spirits through sexual ambiguity; some men nowadays dress up as Kotas, Todas, Kurumbas, or even as Europeans, which is considered very humorous (cf. Elmore 1915: 35–40).

Throughout the entire ceremony, the rigidity of the social hierarchy is reemphasized by reference to generational levels, especially, to the separation of affines from agnates, and to the particular role obligations of Kotas and Todas (low- and high-status tribes) as well as of Toreyas and Wodeyas (low- and high-status Badaga phratries).

Second, auspiciousness must be sought in the face of this most inauspicious of events: there are thus many references to it. Three in particular is a lucky number, and nine is the luckiest number of all. It is therefore easy to see why so many things occur in threes throughout the entire funeral, and why the Wodeyas invite nine elders to eat at the *titti* ceremony in the house of those bereaved. All even numbers are inauspicious, however—a belief that perhaps explains a curious saying: “If death [comes] today, [it will be] three days by tomorrow” (Hockings 1988: 105, no. 54). The morrow is, of course, the most common day for holding the funeral, at least in modern times. The concept applies equally in counting the days of menstruation, for the second day of that im-



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DRAWING 4. Offerings made by specific kin at a funeral.

purity is also considered to be the third: for example, in counting which will be the sixth day on which a woman may return to her kitchen duties. (For purposes of calculation, each day ends at the next sunrise, not at midnight.) Considering the day after the death as the third day may further confuse the evil spirits with a sense of auspiciousness and celebration and so counteract their baleful influence on the vulnerable mourners.

A third basic principle of social life, emphasized throughout the funeral, is the distinction between the sexes. There are different rules of procedure for a male and a female corpse, and different ritual obligations for male and female participants throughout. At all points, men and women stand, sit, or walk somewhat separate from each other. Whenever something is done to or for the corpse, it is the men who do it but the women who weep. Yet everyone is polluted, including the corpse. The corpse will only become purified by fire or, alternatively, by being sanctified as a *linga* inside the Lingayat grave. Women

will be habitually impure for a few days every month, whereas for men, this present impurity is an exceptional circumstance, although, like women's pollution, it is something quite beyond their control. The insistence on sexual distinctions in role playing throughout the ceremony is an attempt to evade the leveling effect of pollution and so to reassert one of the major principles of social stability. Shaving, the act that separates men from the impurity they have suffered, is not required of women, for they will soon be polluted again. In this respect, too, men are different.

Fourth, kin relationships are ruptured by the death of a family member. Virtually all categories of kin are obliged to make some kind of offering, whether it be food, cloth, implements, money, or music, during the course of the funeral, as the diagram makes clear (Drawing 4). Not only do such gifts reaffirm specific kin ties but they also reflect the time depth of the community, since they can be regarded as linking one generation with another—in both marriages and funerals.

Here it may be mentioned that the materials given to the Badaga corpse are, in general, very similar to those offered to a dead Brahmin in other parts of India. These materials include cotton cloth, iron vessels, salt, earth, grain, clarified butter, balls of sweets, and a cow (Stevenson 1920: 140–41). In this respect, as well as in the methods of disposal and the evasive measures directed against evil spirits, the Badagas affirm their Hindu ancestry, (if not an ancient Brahmin ancestry).

Yet, counter to the above obligations to assert their links with the dead individual, there is a measured process of separation going on throughout the entire funeral, beginning from the moment when life leaves the body and ending when the spirit leaves the household after its final meal at the *korumbu*. Counter also to the common Hindu belief, Badagas do not think the soul will be re-incarnated anymore. It has already gone through seven births, and only the seventh incarnation was as a human. Thus no one expects to encounter the soul again on earth.

The steps in this separation of the deceased from the community seem to be marked by an increasing appeal to God on the part of the community: at least, this is what the incidence of prayer suggests. There is no formal prayer while the body lies in the house, none when it comes outside, and none when it is before the Great House. It is only when the corpse has reached the Funeral Grassland on the edge of the village that the first, very long prayer is pronounced. Then, as body and soul move on toward the conclusion of the entire funeral, more and more prayers are uttered. All of them are worded so as to introduce and relate the deceased to gods (Siva and Brahma) and especially to the spirits of departed ancestors, and they specifically plead for acceptance of the soul into the supernatural realms. By the end of all the ceremonies, the transformation of a personality from household member to ancestral spirit is complete.

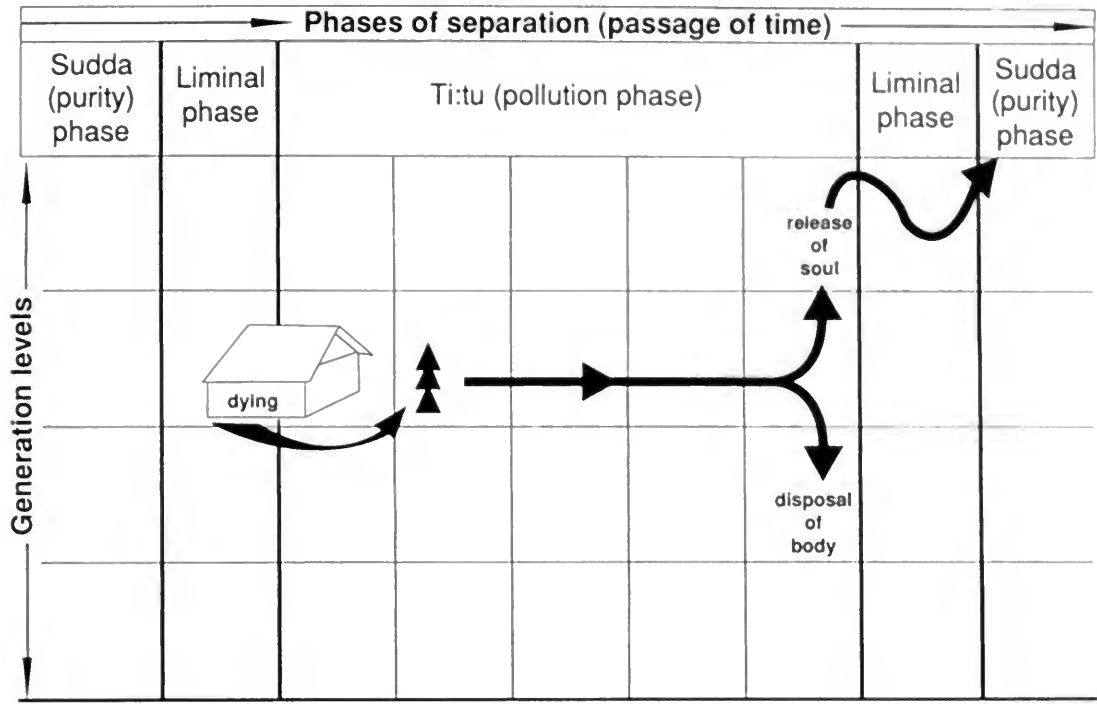
During the course of the funeral (Drawing 1), the dead body is moved to five successive locations in a scenario that, step by step, moves it farther away from the household and progressively separates it from Badaga society. By the time the corpse has reached the burning ground, a few people can be heard giving it messages to bear to their loved ones who have already gone: thus, "Tell my husband that our daughter is . . ." There is nothing in the successive funereal acts to suggest that the family survivors are unwilling to let the dead go; on the contrary, everyone collabo-

rates to send off the dead with food and fanfare—unless he or she was a small child.

The first act of the family at the moment of death is to provision the body, and their last act at the conclusion of the last rites is to provision the soul. This is paralleled by the simple act of placing a small coin in the mouth at the moment of death and later by throwing a coin into the cremation flames or into the Lingayat grave as it is about to be filled. In this manner, the entire process of disposal of the dead is bracketed in time with two monetary offerings, often interpreted as "tolls" by Classical analogy. Both kinds of provisioning mark the division between the liminal phase and the period of *ti:tu*, or pollution: they are both natural, human, and everyday. In between, the above-mentioned prestations (Drawing 4) link categories of relations across what I might characterize as the "great divide" of Badaga social life, that which separates agnates from affines. Everyone within his phratry who is known to Ego is actually or potentially one or the other, for everyone belongs to an exogamous clan.

By the very act of dying the human body obviously becomes separated from its former social life. After some preparation of the body inside the house, it is moved outside onto the front yard, but it still rests on a cot. Thus it is definitively and visibly separated from the household, for no living Badaga would lie on a cot outdoors. (It would be terribly inauspicious for a resting man to be mistaken for a corpse!) Next, the body and cot are taken to one side of the yard in front of the Great House. That house was the first one to be built in the village and hence symbolizes both the founding ancestral couple and the entire village community that has descended patrilineally from them. Here, as the body lies insensible, dancing, music, wailing, greeting, and gift-giving go on around it as the village community prepares to separate itself permanently from a member who is no more. Then the corpse is moved to the village green and the Funeral Grassland, where the final offerings of milk, harvested grain, mud-for-food, and grass (i.e., grazing) are made to one who had been a participant in, and dependent upon, a mixed farming economy. At the Funeral Grassland, the deceased is separated by certain rites from his or her spouse and by absolution from sinful acts of the past. Finally, the burial or cremation separates the body from the soul, which goes toward the north. There is nothing here of the orthodox Hindu idea that the cremation represents a sacrifice, as Parry has argued (Bloch and

The Funeral: A Conceptual Model



DRAWING 5. The funeral: a conceptual model.

Parry 1982: 77–80). Later on, some relatives at the house light the soul on its way and leave it food and water for the journey. Thus the funeral has reiterated “the proper precedence among the constituent parts of society” (Mandelbaum 1959:

197). After it is all over, the survivors quickly begin to separate themselves from the pollution that this death has caused, and life goes on. A final diagram (Drawing 5) is offered to summarize the major features of this transition.





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